

ARE TINY HOUSES USEFUL AND FEASIBLE TO HELP ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS IN ALAMEDA COUNTY?  
HOW COULD TINY HOUSES BE USED, AND UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS?

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## Executive Summary

Alameda County is experiencing a homelessness crisis, and interest in tiny houses as a possible and limited way to address the issue is increasing. While over a dozen tiny house villages have been developed across the U.S. to address homelessness, questions remain about the extent to which they are helpful in Alameda County, a high density and costly region.

This report explores the application of tiny houses to Alameda County by providing background information about tiny houses for homeless individuals, including a brief history of tiny houses in the U.S. and the contemporary tiny house movement. The report next discusses the tiny house for homeless village model, including components of a successful village, challenges and opportunities for tiny house villages, and recent legislation and trends. Applications of the model are discussed, including micro-apartments, Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), and mobile homes. Finally, case studies of tiny house projects that are developed or underway in Oakland, Berkeley, and Hayward are presented.

Entities pursuing tiny house projects tend to be civically-minded and entrepreneurial, acting urgently to take matters into their own hands to help their unsheltered neighbors. This report finds that well-planned tiny house projects could be supported through specific changes to local zoning and permitting processes as a way to complement other ongoing efforts to address homelessness. The report investigates the following four questions, with findings summarized beneath each question:

### How are tiny houses *useful* to help address homelessness in Alameda County?

- An insufficient amount of alternative housing exists for homeless individuals.
- Units are built in compliance with local and federal building standards.
- A local entity (either municipal, nonprofit, faith-based, or private citizen) is willing and able to put in the leg work.
- Support services are provided in either a transitional or permanent housing model to integrate the individuals into the community. If the housing is transitional, there must be placement to more stable housing options.
- Outreach to sheltered neighbors takes place so that the homes are integrated into the broader community.

### How can tiny houses be *feasible* to help address homelessness in Alameda County?

- A recent change to the California Building Code creates new minimum standards for emergency housing that significantly reduce the barriers to building tiny houses for homeless people. This change is significant because outside of these new minimum standards, tiny houses either need to comply with state building codes meant for conventional single family homes or to comply with RV standards – both of which can be prohibitive and out of scale with these projects. To invoke the new emergency standards a local ordinance must be passed declaring an emergency housing crisis along with adopting the new emergency building standards, and a local re-zoning may be necessary.
- Development in high density/high cost areas is feasible when the development is infill, built on land that is already underutilized, or built provisionally on land that is owned or leased by a city to bring more services to an encampment.

- Tiny house villages, typically comprised of free standing detached units, are frequently able to reduce startup capital costs by acquiring land at a reduced cost and attracting sweat equity to build units.
- Operating costs are frequently reduced through a combination of grants from foundations and private individuals, micro-enterprises, federal subsidies, and regular chores performed by residents.

### What characteristics make tiny house communities successful, as shown by examples of successful developments?

- Common buildings with shared facilities, including a kitchen, laundry, showers, and portable toilets, both provide opportunities for more communal living and supplement the low square footage of individual units.
- Most villages offer residents support services, including case management, dental and health care, behavioral health, workforce development, workshop and support groups, and transportation.
- Many villages provide transportation, either by arranging for a bus to come to the community, or locating their community close to public transportation (1/8 to half of a mile). Many villages operating throughout the country are either 1-3 miles from or within the city center, with only a few villages 4-10 miles away from the city center.
- Residents typically undergo a selection and approval process, either through a coordinated entry process (qualifying under HUD's definition of chronically homeless), application and intake process (a process that can include a background check, medical questionnaire, skills and education inventory, sweat equity, and/or participation in membership meetings) and/or referral by agencies, religious leaders, and community members.

### What specific changes to local zoning, design, and permitting processes would make it more efficient to build tiny houses for homeless individuals in Alameda County?

- The Alameda County Board of Supervisors recently declared a shelter crisis in Alameda County. Alameda County should take the next step and adopt the new emergency housing minimum standards that were added as an appendix to the 2016 California Building Code and 2016 California Residential Code that significantly reduce the barriers to building tiny houses for homeless people.
- California State Housing and Community Development (HCD) should consider developing and adopting building code standards that are unique to tiny houses rather than applying existing building standards to tiny houses.
- Emergency housing should be permitted in more zoning districts. In Alameda County, the General Ordinance Code currently allows for emergency housing only in the R-4 multiple residence district.
- Additional parcels that can be zoned as mobile home parks should be identified.
- Permit fees should be waived for groups that want to build tiny house villages, including: building, zoning, planning, inspection, and dumping fees. Costs associated with these fees can make a project with a relatively small budget cost prohibitive or are unduly disproportionate to the total budget. Parking, open space, and lot coverage requirements should be waived as well because many of these requirements do not apply to the scale of tiny house village developments.
- A manual showing best practices for tiny house implementation, including evaluation metrics, staffing, construction, and design, should be developed and implemented to make the process of building tiny houses more efficient.

## Acknowledgements

I was encouraged to work on issues related to homelessness from my experiences growing up in a reform Jewish congregation in Los Angeles. Our rabbi would organize dinners to serve food to homeless people in a nearby park. We had many conversations with the people we were sharing food with and we talked about the importance of Tikkun Olam, which translates to “repair the world.” While an undergraduate at UC Berkeley, the opportunity to take a course from Helaine Kaplan Prentice and then work as a research assistant at Karen Chapple’s Center for Community Innovation showed me that city and regional planning was a path that I could take to work on housing issues as a professional.

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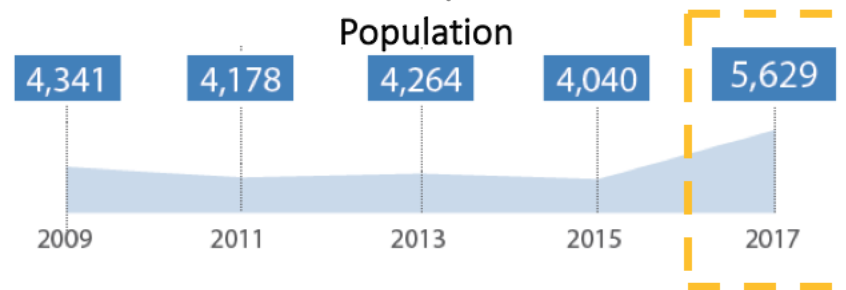
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## Introduction

Alameda County is experiencing a homeless crisis. According to the 2017 homeless census there are 5,629 homeless people in Alameda County, 69% of whom are unsheltered.<sup>1</sup> While the census provides a point-in-time snapshot, 2-3 times more people experience homelessness during the course of a year, based on data in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Figure 1 below, taken from the 2017 homeless census, shows that the homeless count for Alameda County is at its highest point since 2009. Additionally, there was a large increase in homelessness between 2015 when the homeless count was 4,040 compared with 2017.



*Figure 1. 2009-2017: Alameda County Homeless Population Increase.*

Source: 2017 Alameda County Everyone Counts Homeless Point-in-Time Count and Survey. Retrieved April 2018 from: [http://everyonehome.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/ALAEMDA\\_7-1.pdf](http://everyonehome.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/ALAEMDA_7-1.pdf)

The scale of the crisis demands that we develop innovative, solutions-oriented proposals to address this problem. A broad range of efforts aimed at creating tiny housing to address homelessness have cropped up across Alameda County. Some efforts include Tuff Shed shelters in Oakland, development of tiny houses in the backyard of a private citizen in Hayward, a nonprofit that is pushing for tiny houses for homeless youth in Berkeley, and a proposal to build six tiny houses on a church's property in unincorporated Alameda County. A common theme of all of these approaches is that they are ad hoc and resourceful. Many efforts are also grass roots.

There is not a single, agreed upon definition of what a tiny house is in common use and the term is increasingly used to mean many different types of structures. In vernacular use, tiny houses could refer to any of the following house types:

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<sup>1</sup> 2017 Alameda County Everyone Counts Homeless Point-in-Time Count and Survey. Applied Survey Research. Retrieved April 2018 from: [http://everyonehome.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/ALAEMDA\\_7-1.pdf](http://everyonehome.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/ALAEMDA_7-1.pdf)



**Makeshift Shelters**  
Informal shelters made from found materials by West Oakland artist.



**Accessory Dwelling Unit**  
Small cottage in backyard that is legally part of same property as main home.



**Tiny House on Wheels**  
Complies with existing code for trailers and RVs.



**“Tuff Shed”-like Shelters**  
Fresno provides transitional housing in a village configuration.



**Micro-apartments**  
Includes small studios or one-bedroom apartments and SRO units with communal spaces.

*Figure 2. Tiny House Types*

There is currently no statutory or regulatory definition for tiny houses in California. The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) allows for a variety of structures to be defined as a tiny house as long as they fall between 80 and 400 square feet in size. The definition comes from an informational bulletin issued in May 2016 that sought to “clarify the legality of use, design and construction approval of any residential structure that may be commonly referred to as a tiny house.”<sup>2</sup>

A Recreational Vehicle (RV), Park Trailer (PT), Manufactured Home, Factory-Built Housing, or Camping Cabin, could then all be considered a tiny house. But depending on their construction, the house would be subject to different regulatory requirements or fall under the jurisdiction of another agency. For example, the CA HCD memo states that structures built on a chassis with wheels do not fall under the CA HCD’s jurisdiction. If the tiny house is placed on a permanent foundation then it must comply with California building

<sup>2</sup> “Tiny houses” Information Bulletin. California Department of Housing and Community Development. May 9, 2016. Retrieved April 2018 from: <http://www.hcd.ca.gov/docs/IB2016-01.pdf>.



codes and standards.<sup>3</sup> Recent CA building code and State Assembly legislation that eases the way for tiny houses will be discussed later on in the report in the “Recent Regulatory Changes in California” section. Locally, the absence of a clear definition of tiny houses has resulted in some efforts to get around permitting and zoning codes through requesting conditional use permits or overlay zoning.

Free standing detached tiny houses represent a partial solution to address homelessness. Nevertheless, they are being taken up as a “do-it-yourself” strategy by enterprising and civically minded people because they are cheaper and faster to construct than typical affordable housing on a per unit basis. For example, BRIDGE Housing’s 2016/2017 Annual Report shows an average development cost per unit of \$626,900 for affordable housing developments in San Francisco (development costs include construction cost and construction interest, land/infrastructure, architecture and engineering, legal, and the developer’s fee). The per unit capital costs of units in tiny house villages tend to range from below ten thousand dollars to one hundred thousand dollars, as illustrated in Table 1 below that breaks out capital and operating costs for three examples.

Of course, the cost of building units cannot be considered in a vacuum: one must also consider other costs associated with development. Other costs can include whether the land is owned upfront or must be purchased, construction type and materials, whether there is electricity and other utilities onsite, and there are often additional considerations. An important difference between Alameda County and the cities profiled in Table 1 showing costs for tiny house villages in Eugene, Oregon and Olympia, Washington is that they are lower density in terms of population per square mile than about half of the cities in Alameda County. It is also important to note that two out of the three villages are built on land that was either city or county owned, although Emerald Village is built on 1.1 acres of land that was purchased for \$281K.<sup>4</sup> A more extensive breakdown of costs based on a survey of eleven tiny house villages and programs across the U.S. conducted for this report during the summer of 2017 will be discussed later in the “Tiny Houses for Homeless” section of this report.

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<sup>3</sup> “Tiny houses” Information Bulletin. California Department of Housing and Community Development. May 9, 2016. Retrieved April 2018 from: <http://www.hcd.ca.gov/docs/IB2016-01.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> “It Takes a Community to Raise a Village.” Square One Villages. June 2017. Retrieved April 2018 from: [https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/bd125b\\_3f934416b8fa48ea965c85f015d546dd.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/bd125b_3f934416b8fa48ea965c85f015d546dd.pdf).

*Table 1. Tiny House Example Capital and Operating Costs*

Village Name	Location	CAPITAL			OPERATING		
		Startup Cost	Cost/Unit	Notes	Total Cost	Tenant Cost	Notes
Opportunity Village <i>Transitional</i> 29 units	Eugene, OR	\$212K \$114K in-kind	\$7.3K	Built on city land	\$90 / mth	\$30 / mth utility & chore hours	\$60 / mth remaining covered by fundraising
Emerald Village <i>Permanent</i> 22 units	Eugene, OR	\$1.5MM	\$60K	Capital costs include cost of land	\$250-\$400 / mth	\$250-\$300 / mth	Indiv. on disability need not spend > 1/3 income on housing
Quixote Village <i>Permanent</i> 30 units	Olympia, WA	\$3.16MM	\$102K (does not include in-kind labor)	Built on county land; \$2.6 MM fundraised from CDBG & private sources	Covered primarily through Section 8 project vouchers & state/county grants	\$30% of income \$50 minimum	~1/3 of operating costs spent on utilities & maintenance

Source: Adapted from “Making a Tiny Deal of It: A Feasibility Study of Tiny house Villages to Increase Affordable Housing in Lane County, Oregon,” by Sara Abarbanel, Cassandra Bayer, Paloma Corcuera, and Nancy Stetson, Goldman School of Public Policy. May 2016. Retrieved April 2018 from: [http://media.wix.com/ugd/bd125b\\_211036ccef7432aa1e7108f934db279.pdf](http://media.wix.com/ugd/bd125b_211036ccef7432aa1e7108f934db279.pdf)

Tiny houses are on many people’s minds: local elected officials, private developers, and homeless advocates. In Alameda County, tiny houses were frequently brought up during the A1 bond measure planning process – an affordable housing bond that passed in fall 2016 to raise \$580 million to provide affordable local housing and prevent displacement of vulnerable populations, including low- and moderate-income households, veterans, seniors, and persons with disabilities; provide supportive housing for homeless people countywide; and help low- and middle-income households purchase homes and stay in their communities. Before that in 2014, a U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) spokesperson described tiny houses as an important step to providing assistance to homeless

individuals: “It’s certainly something that we should encourage other communities to take a look at when it comes to creating solutions for housing the chronically homeless. It’s a very important step in terms of the kinds of services we should be providing to people the need assistance.”

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*– Lee Jones, Regional Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, reported by Yes! Magazine on February 20, 2014<sup>5</sup>*

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At the same time that tiny houses are gaining popularity, there are pros and cons to consider whether, when, what, and where tiny houses are an appropriate response to homelessness. In 2016, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness raised a list of issues to consider when evaluating tiny houses as a response to homelessness that will be discussed later on in the “Asking the Right Questions about Tiny houses” section of this report. Additional questions raised by housing advocates around tiny houses include whether they are too tiny to be comfortable or healthy; whether they are consistent with the character of neighborhoods; whether in our urbanized, high land cost areas, tiny houses are an efficient use of land to address housing and homeless housing needs; whether they are a scalable model; and whether they are politically feasible.

This report will address these questions by discussing best practice characteristics of successful models and will also discuss possible limitations of the model specific to Alameda County. The report focuses on free-standing tiny houses for transitional and permanent supportive housing for unsheltered homeless individuals, and also discusses three additional types of housing as applications of the tiny house village model: sanctioned encampments, micro units for permanent supportive housing, and Accessory Dwelling Units for homeless families. The geographic focus of this report is Oakland, Berkeley, and Hayward because 75% of the county’s unsheltered homeless population are currently living in these cities according to the 2017 Point-In-Time homeless census.

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<sup>5</sup> “Tiny Houses for the Homeless: An Affordable Solution Catches On.” Yes! Magazine. February 20, 2014. Retrieved April 2018 from <http://www.yesmagazine.org/new-economy/tiny-house-villages-for-the-homeless-an-affordable-solution-catches-on>.

The report will investigate the following four questions:

1. How are tiny houses *useful* to help address homelessness in Alameda County?
2. How can tiny houses be *feasible* to help address homelessness in Alameda County?
3. What characteristics make tiny house communities successful, as shown by examples of successful developments?
4. What specific changes to local zoning, design, and permitting processes would make it more efficient to build tiny houses for homeless individuals?

The report will next provide a background on tiny houses for homeless populations, including a brief history of tiny houses in the U.S. and the contemporary tiny house movement. The tiny house for homeless village model, including its components, challenges and opportunities, and recent legislation and trends will next be reviewed. Case studies focused on on-going efforts in Oakland, Berkeley, and Hayward will be presented with known challenges highlighted. Applications of the model, including sanctioned encampments, micro-units, Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), and mobile homes will be assessed. The report concludes with recommended changes to local zoning, design, and permitting processes that would make it more efficient to build tiny houses in Alameda County.

## Background on Tiny Houses for the Homeless

### “Housing First” Philosophy

Tiny houses follow the “Housing First” philosophy, which the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) considers to be the most effective approach to ending chronic homelessness. This approach prioritizes providing housing to homeless individuals to help end their homelessness without mandating participation in supportive services or graduation from a program to qualify.<sup>6</sup>

According to USICH, there are two housing approaches within the Housing First framework:

- Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH): For individuals and families with chronic illnesses, disabilities, mental health issues, or substance use disorders who have experienced long-term or repeated homelessness. It provides long-term rental assistance and supportive services.
- Rapid re-housing: For individuals and families living on the streets or in emergency shelters. It provides short-term rental assistance and services. The goals are to help people obtain housing quickly, increase self-sufficiency, and remain housed.

The Housing First model emerged from an extensive study that began in 1992 under the direction of a psychologist at New York University named Sam Tsemberis as part of a group called Pathways to Housing. The test involved providing apartments to 242 chronically homeless individuals. The individuals were provided with apartments and given the choice of participating in services. After five years, 88 percent of the individuals were still in their assigned apartments, and the cost of caring for them in their own homes was a little less than what it would have cost to take care of them on the street.<sup>7</sup>

Tiny houses are not the only housing type that would fall under a Housing First approach, but many tiny house communities do fulfill the basic tenets. Depending on their construction type and the services offered, tiny houses can offer either Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid re-housing.

Sanctioned encampments, increasingly being used as a strategy to address homelessness, would not fall under the Housing First approach. However, sanctioned encampments will be discussed in this report because 1) many advocates in Alameda County feel that there is a need for even faster, more low-cost solutions than tiny houses can provide and 2) sanctioned encampments are part of a

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<sup>6</sup> “Housing First.” National Alliance to End Homelessness. April 20, 2016. Retrieved April 2018 from: <https://endhomelessness.org/resource/housing-first/>.

<sup>7</sup> “The Solution to Seattle’s Homeless Problem is Painfully Obvious.” Seattle Weekly. June 29, 2016. Retrieved April 2018 from: <http://www.seattleweekly.com/news/the-solution-to-seattles-homeless-problem-is-painfully-obvious/>.

continuum that starts as a self-organized camp and then may become a tiny house village (as discussed by Andrew Heben in his book Tent City Urbanism).

### Brief History of Tiny Houses in the U.S.

Small shelters for the homeless and extremely low income households are not new. Two types in particular – Depression-era Hooverville shanty towns and Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels – can resemble current tent encampments and micro-unit housing, respectively. Critics like Carol Denney are part of an essential debate about these forms of housing:

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*“Tiny houses are an insidious, seductive mechanism for pouring enormous amounts of resources into housing as few people as possible. You can build real houses for a lot less for what you’re getting. But the ‘cute’ factor of tiny houses just takes people apart. We are a rich country. Why should homeless people have to live in something super-small just because they are poor?”*

*--Carol Denney, an editor of the Street Spirit homeless-activist newspaper, Berkeley<sup>8</sup>*

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This debate recalls the advocacy of reformer Jacob Riis, author of *How the Other Half Lives*. He hoped to prevent this type of “slum” living by including photographs of cheap lodging houses in his book. This section explores whether there are substantive parallels between historic and contemporary models.

### Hooverville Shanty Towns and Tent Cities

Today’s tent cities are frequently compared with Hooverville shanty towns by the mainstream media. For example, common impressions of today’s camps can be found in headlines such as the Mercury News’s “San Jose has modern version of Depression-era encampments” from 2013, and the Los Angeles Times’s “Occupy Wall Street Camps are today’s Hoovervilles” from 2012.

Hooverville shanty towns were built during the Great Depression by the homeless. Shanty towns had existed before the Great Depression, but unemployment increased their number exponentially. They were derisively named after the highly unpopular former U.S. President Herbert Hoover. People living in the shanty towns built their own shelters out of available materials that were easy to

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<sup>8</sup> “Bay Area Buys into Hottest Homeless Housing Trend: Tiny houses.” San Francisco Chronicle. March 28, 2016. Retrieved April 2018 from: [http://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/Bay-Area-buys-in-to-hottest-homeless-housing-7045171.php?cmpid=sfc\\_em\\_topstories#photo-9698460](http://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/Bay-Area-buys-in-to-hottest-homeless-housing-7045171.php?cmpid=sfc_em_topstories#photo-9698460).

work with, like wood from crates, cardboard, scrap metal, and stone. They are described as “grim and unsanitary,” posing health risks to residents, but they were tolerated because residents had nowhere else to go. After 1940 when the economy recovered, and Roosevelt’s New Deal helped reduce unemployment, municipal programs aimed at eradicating the shanty towns razed them.<sup>9</sup>

Some advocates in the field believe that the comparison between shanty towns and tent cities is unfounded. One paper published in 2015 takes a comparative look at encampments in Fresno, California and Seattle, Washington and argues that contemporary tent cities are different than the shanty towns of the 1930s because they are not both the product of large recessions. The authors make that argument based on the timeline of their emergence (they do not correspond with the Great Recession of 2008) and the circumstances of people who are living there (many are not formerly middle class people who lost their homes). They argue that encampments exist because cities do not have the resources to address homelessness and that they have become preferable to “repulsive” (the study’s authors’ word) shelter arrangements.<sup>10</sup> Some advocates and city officials have begun to consider sanctioned encampments as legitimate shelter alternatives, at least temporarily, given the number of homeless people and limits on resources to serve them.

While the authors of the 2015 study did not look at encampments in Alameda County, their point about the encampments becoming an increasingly tolerated shelter option until more legitimate alternatives are developed may be gaining some traction. In December 2017, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors allocated up to \$1 million for grants to cities to assist in immediate efforts to serve unsheltered people and impact homeless encampments. The purpose of the funds is to assist people living in encampments and to reduce negative impacts on them and their sheltered neighbors. It is important to note that although the Board of Supervisors approved these funds, they did not approve encampments as a legitimate (or desirable) alternative to shelters and/or housing. Prior, a 2015 study prepared for the City of Oakland by graduate students at UC Berkeley’s Goldman School of Public Policy recommended city-sanctioned encampments as one strategy. The report cited as examples existing encampments that have varying levels of self-governance structures and external involvement from cities, ranging from legal recognition to service provision.<sup>11</sup>

Advocate Andrew Heben, who co-founded a nonprofit that advocates for and builds self-managed tiny house villages, sees encampments differently. Perhaps one of the most prominent tiny house for homeless activists, Heben writes in his 2014 book Tent

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<sup>9</sup> “Hoovervilles.” History. Retrieved April 2018 from: <http://www.history.com/topics/hoovervilles>.

<sup>10</sup> “The Roots and Implications of the USA’s Homeless Tent Cities.” Chris Herring and Manuel Lutz. 2015. City, 19:5, 689-701, DOI: [10.1080/13604813.2015.1071114](https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2015.1071114).

<sup>11</sup> “A Place to Be: Alternatives to Unsanctioned Homeless Encampments.” A Report for the City of Oakland from the Goldman School of Public Policy, Berkeley, CA. May 1, 2015. Retrieved April 2018 from <https://gspp.berkeley.edu/assets/uploads/page/15-13160 - Goldman Student Report - Final Draft - May 11 2015 reduced size.pdf.pdf>.

City Urbanism that he was “attracted to them [tent cities] because they presented a striking opportunity – a foundation for a self-managed, human-scale model of low-cost and low-impact housing” (44). Heben sees tent cities as attractive in part because they are a more organic and populist expression of city living (à la Christopher Alexander, author of “A City is Not a Tree”), in opposition to more top-down forms of urban planning. Perhaps more to the point, he sees what he calls the “village model,” with its attendant physical, social, economic, and ecological best practices, as essential for successfully organizing and managing tent cities. These characteristics will be discussed in more depth in the “Tiny Houses for the Homeless Village Model” section of this report.

#### Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Hotels and Micro-units

Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels are a form of housing where one person (or sometimes a couple) is housed in an individual room within a multiple tenant building. SROs can have individual bathrooms for each room or shared facilities per floor. Kitchen facilities also vary. They are primarily rented as permanent residences and are often a form of affordable housing for low-income and formerly homeless individuals. The first National Coalition for the Homeless Factsheet published in 2007 called “Why are People Homeless” discusses the loss of SRO hotels as a significant factor contributing to homelessness. For example, from 1975 to 1988, San Francisco lost 43% of its stock of low-cost residential hotels. The loss of SRO hotels is significant because SROs provided a form of housing that had served many individuals, including those suffering from mental illness or substance abuse.<sup>12</sup> It has been relatively easy to convert SROs, because the buildings can be readily upgraded. Less so with a building type like mobile homes, for example.

In dense cities where land is expensive and the cost of construction is high, such as New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, micro-units are being proposed as affordable units and, in some cases, as housing for homeless individuals. In their 2014 report “The Macro View on Micro Units,” the Urban Land Institute states that no standard definition of micro units exists and that they can range from anywhere between 300 square feet in New York City or 500 square feet in Dallas. Essentially, the size is determined by the market in which they are built. While micro-units can be SROs, the negative connotations lingering from their historic use as cheap, overcrowded boarding houses has led to the industry wanting to re-brand the term:

A micro unit is a somewhat ambiguous term that covers anything from a relatively small studio or one-bedroom apartment to a short-term lease, SRO unit with communal kitchen and common room areas. In fact, many in the industry are moving away from branding their

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<sup>12</sup> “Why are People Homeless? NCH Fact Sheet #1” National Coalition for the Homeless. June 2007. Retrieved April 2018 from: [http://creativemindexpansion.weebly.com/uploads/8/6/2/0/86201306/homelessnesswhy\\_1.pdf](http://creativemindexpansion.weebly.com/uploads/8/6/2/0/86201306/homelessnesswhy_1.pdf).



units as micro because the term has begun to arouse negative connotations associated with higher density, overcrowding, and transient populations (5).<sup>13</sup>

Concerns about negative psychological impacts are also part of the current discussion about the suitability of micro units. An article in *The Atlantic* from December 2013 discusses the stressors surrounding micro units such as the possible lack of privacy among multiple family members and the challenge of constantly rearranging furniture for different uses throughout the day (i.e. putting away a fold out bed in the morning to provide floor space). The article also quotes Samuel Gosling, a University of Texas psychology professor who studies the connection between people and their possessions, as saying that “...an apartment has to fill other psychological needs... such as self-expression and relaxation, that might not be as easily met in a highly cramped space.”<sup>14</sup>

On the other hand, SROs have held an important space in the history of Bay Area affordable housing. Paul Groth, one of the foremost academics on the topic of SROs, writes in his 1994 book Living Downtown: The History of Residential Hotels in the United States about the misunderstanding of life in SROs because the lifestyle goes against mainstream norms for American life (individuals who are single rather than coupled or living as part of a family), and the cultural demographics of the individuals living in SROs. Although not monolithic, hotel life offered more individual freedom than other types of living and few other types of housing were suited to fit the needs of the individuals that lived there.<sup>15</sup>

A housing trust fund based in Iowa wrote a study in 2013 discussing the benefits of combining permanent supportive housing with the SRO model. They indicate that while many SROs have been demolished or converted to other uses, the demand for SROs is only growing. The report provides case studies that show promising results in helping formerly homeless individuals achieve stability.<sup>16</sup>

### Contemporary Movement: Downsizing versus Upsizing

There are two movements simultaneously pushing for tiny houses: “Tiny House Nation” (also sometimes referred to as the “Tiny House Movement”), and advocates of tiny houses for the homeless. The two movements are made up of different constituencies with

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<sup>13</sup> “The Macro View on Micro Units.” Urban Land Institute. 2014. Retrieved April 2018 from: [http://uli.org/wp-content/uploads/ULI-Documents/MicroUnit\\_full\\_rev\\_2015.pdf](http://uli.org/wp-content/uploads/ULI-Documents/MicroUnit_full_rev_2015.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> “The Health Risks of Small Apartments.” Jacoba Urist, *The Atlantic*. December 19, 2013. Retrieved April 2018 from: <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2013/12/the-health-risks-of-small-apartments/282150/>.

<sup>15</sup> Paul Groth. *Living Downtown: The History of Residential Hotels in the United States*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

<sup>16</sup> “Combating Homelessness: Single Room Occupancy Housing. A Study of Single Room Occupancy Housing and Practical Applications to Polk County.” Polk County Housing Trust Fund. 2013. Retrieved April 2018 from: <http://www.pchtf.org/upl/downloads/landing-page/homelessness-in-the-des-moines-metro-document5.pdf>.

little in common except for the tiny size of unit that they are promoting and perhaps some overlapping advocacy agendas (recent legislative gains will be discussed in the “Tiny Houses for the Homeless Village Model” section of this report).



*Figure 3. Tiny Houses Movement versus Tiny houses for the Homelessness.*

Source: Tumbleweed Tiny House Company. Retrieved April 21, 2018 from <https://www.tumbleweedhouses.com/>; “Homes of Steel for the Brave Heart,” American Family Housing. Retrieved April 21, 2018 from <http://www.afhusa.org/potterslane.php>.

### Tiny House Nation

“Tiny House Nation” generally refers to the environmentalist, minimalist movement to build tiny houses. Members of this movement include millennials looking to break into the housing market and attracted to an affordable and off-grid alternative to conventional houses. The movement also contains retirees looking to downsize and attain a more minimalist lifestyle that offers more opportunities for travel and leisure time.

The movement toward tiny house living, often with reference to Thoreau's *Walden*, was started by Jay Shafer, a man whom The New Yorker profiled in July 2011 and described as a "brainy misfit." Shafer built his first tiny house in Iowa in 1999 and now owns his own tiny house building company called Tumbleweed Tiny House Company. Base prices for these homes start at around \$60k and there are many customizable upgrades available to the exterior and interiors. The houses are built on wheels or as RVs because it is easier to get a loan for an RV and also because housing codes don't apply.<sup>17</sup> This report will go into these types of loopholes in more depth in the "Tiny Houses for the Homeless Village Model" section of this report.

Proponents justify a turn toward building more tiny houses for environmental and financial reasons. For example, in recommending code changes to the International Building Code to help pave the way for tiny houses in building standards, the International Residential Code (IRC) committee noted the following facts:

- While the average home size in the United States has increased 61% since 1973 to over 2600 square feet, the average household size has decreased, leading to a 91% increase in home square footage per inhabitant.
- Reducing building size is the "easiest way to lower energy consumption."
- National homeownership fell to 63.7% in 2015, the lowest level in two decades according to research from the Joint Center for Housing Studies (JCHS) at Harvard University.
- The average cost to build a home in the United States is \$358,000 and has increased by roughly \$200,000 since 1998 whereas average annual income has remained flat for the last several years at roughly \$52,000. The cost of new construction for a 200-square foot tiny house can be as low as \$35,000. A typical down payment on an average-sized house is \$72,000, more than twice the full cost of a tiny house.<sup>18</sup>

Tiny house living for members of "Tiny House Nation" is as much about lifestyle as it is about the size of the dwelling. TV shows (Tiny House Hunters, Tiny House Builders, Tiny House Nation), documentaries (Tiny: A Story about Living Small), meetup groups (East Bay Tiny House Enthusiasts), blogs (Tiny House Blog), Instagram celebrities, and builders all cater to people who want to live in tiny houses. There is even a trade association called American Tiny House Association that serves as a network of tiny house enthusiasts with the mission of "promoting the tiny house as a viable, formally acceptable dwelling option for a wide variety of people."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> "Let's Get Small: The Rise of the Tiny House Movement." Alec Wilkinson, The New Yorker. July 25, 2011. Retrieved April 2018 from: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/07/25/lets-get-small>.

<sup>18</sup> "Proposed Tiny Houses Appendix and Reason Statement." American Tiny House Association. September 2016. Retrieved April 2018 from: <http://americantinyhouseassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Proposed-Tiny-House-Appendix-and-Reason-Statement.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> "Our Mission." American Tiny House Association. Retrieved April 2018 from: <http://americantinyhouseassociation.org/our-mission/>.

## Tiny Houses for the Homeless Village Model

### Components of a Successful Village

If the “Tiny House Movement” is generally a trend toward downsizing, tiny houses for homeless people represent the opposite – upsizing. Andrew Heben, author of Tent City Urbanism and someone who is working at the forefront of the tiny house for homeless movement, has put together a useful framework for describing key elements of what he calls a “village model” that are typically comprised of one story detached units (as opposed to small apartment projects of 2-5 stories) constructed from a variety of materials.<sup>20</sup> In addition to tiny houses, the successful tiny house village according to Heben and described in Table 2 below, consists of common buildings, self-governance, village meetings, a community agreement, and non-profit sponsor.

*Table 2. Andrew Heben's Six Components of a Successful Village*

<b>1. Tiny houses</b>	Individual homes of 400 square feet or less.
<b>2. Common Buildings</b>	Shared facilities and resources to supplement tiny houses.
<b>3. Self-Governance</b>	Involvement of residents in decision making and management.
<b>4. Village Meeting</b>	Residents meet as a community at least once a month.
<b>5. Community Agreement</b>	A basic code of conduct that all residents agree to abide by.
<b>6. Non-Profit Sponsor</b>	An entity that provides ongoing administration, oversight, and support.

Source: “Tiny House Village Toolbox” retrieved April 5, 2018, from <https://www.squareonevillages.org/village-model>.

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<sup>20</sup> In a survey of 11 tiny house villages that serve homeless individuals across the U.S., villages indicated that they provide the following tiny house types: bungalow, Conestoga Hut, modular, permanent micro home, Recreational Vehicles (RV), shed, shipping container, tent, tiny house on a foundation, tiny house on skids, and tiny house on wheels. Three villages indicated that their housing units can move on wheels, 3 villages indicated that their housing units are portable through another means, and 3 villages indicated that their housing units are non-portable. Seven villages indicated that their units had been built through a combination of prefabrication and building on-site. One village indicated that their units had been exclusively prefabricated off-site and 1 village indicated that their units had been exclusively built on-site. Eight villages indicated that units had been built from wood, 3 from metal, 2 from brick/concrete, and 1 from plastic. Villages selected multiple options from a list of materials. Additional materials that were written in response to an open text “Other” option include: marine grade canvas and mud (sand, clay, and straw).

The key takeaway from this model is that while individual units are tiny – 400 square feet or less<sup>21</sup> – in best case scenarios, residents are not isolated from each other because they are living as part of a community. Common buildings with shared facilities, including a kitchen, laundry, showers, and portable toilets, both provide opportunities for more communal living and supplement the tiny square footage of individual units. Most villages additionally offer residents support services, including case management, access to dental and health care, behavioral health, workforce development, workshop and support groups, and transportation.<sup>22</sup> A survey conducted for this report of staff working at 11 tiny house villages that serve homeless individuals across the U.S.<sup>23</sup> (respondents included a CEO, board member, project director, director of education and outreach, director of program development, and more) indicates that the number of villages providing transitional<sup>24</sup> and/or permanent housing (villages could indicate that they provide both transitional and permanent housing in response to the question)<sup>25</sup> to residents is nearly equivalent.

Of course, existing tiny house villages do not align with all components of Heben’s village model. Some tiny house villages have elements of a self-governance model in place, including community agreements and council meetings, but it is unknown to what extent these are successfully practiced to provide an adequate level of resident input and autonomy. Residents undergo a selection and approval process, either through a coordinated entry process (qualifying under HUD’s definition of chronically homeless), application and intake process (a process that can include a background check, medical questionnaire, skills and education inventory, sweat equity, and/or participation in membership meetings) and/or referral by agencies, religious leaders, and community members.

Tiny house villages do not necessarily need a non-profit sponsor – they can be owned by different entity types. Of the 11 tiny house villages serving homeless individuals surveyed for this report, a majority (7) are owned by non-profits, 2 are owned by public entities

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<sup>21</sup> Tiny houses are 80-400 square feet, but micro-apartments are often larger. Within the 80-400 square feet range for tiny houses, some villages have different size units for single family adults versus Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant accessible units, tiny houses for couples, and tiny houses for families.

<sup>22</sup> In a survey of 11 tiny house villages that serve homeless individuals across the U.S. conducted for this report, of the six villages that indicated that they provide transportation, one village indicated that a bus comes into the community, 1 village responded that their community is 1/8 of a mile from public transportation, 1 village responded that their community is ¼ of a mile from public transportation, 1 village responded that their community is within ¼ of a mile from public transportation, 1 village responded that their community is ½ of a mile from public transportation, and 1 village responded that their community is within ½ a mile from public transportation. In a separate question about how far away their village is from the city center, 5 responded that the village is 1-3 miles away, 3 responded that the village is 4-10 miles away, and 2 villages responded that they are within the city center.

<sup>23</sup> 9 survey respondents are tiny house villages, 1 of the survey respondents is a micro-apartment development with units 480 square feet in size made from shipping containers, and 1 of the survey respondents is a tiny house program and provider of tiny house shelters.

<sup>24</sup> Transitional housing is defined as housing offered with support services for a defined period of time to facilitate movement to independent living.

<sup>25</sup> Permanent housing is defined as housing offered with support services with no time limit.

(city or county), 2 are faith-based, and 1 is privately owned. The ownership of one village had changed several times, (from faith-based, to non-profit, to private ownership). One village indicated that their village is a partnership with private and faith-based organizations, and a second indicated that the entity is a membership-based non-profit and so it is technically owned by the residents of the village. Additionally, villages could select multiple responses to this question, and so it is possible that more villages are the result of partnerships between and among entity types.

An additional component of a successful village may be the ability to reduce startup capital costs (ranging from \$0-\$7M reported by 5 survey respondents) by acquiring land at a reduced cost and attracting sweat equity to build units. Based on survey responses, land was donated, already owned, provided for free through a contract with the city, or leased at a reduced amount (e.g. the city council passed a motion to lease city-owned land for \$1 per year). Only one tiny house village indicated that they had incorporated into a non-profit and then purchased the property. Additionally, 7 villages indicated that they relied on sweat equity to build their units, with an average of 3,399 hours estimated for building all units in the village (the minimum was 3 hours and the maximum was 2,000 hours).

Operating costs ranging from \$400-\$1.5M per year (this works out to roughly \$11 per unit per year - \$6,250 per unit per year) reported by 8 survey respondents are reduced through a combination of grants from foundations and private individuals, micro-enterprises (including a retail store, firewood sales, and a scrap metal program), federal subsidies (including HUD and Social Security Income), and regular chores performed by residents. The cost to resident per month ranges from \$0-\$430, with 7 villages indicating that residents are required to perform chores as part of living in the unit. Seventeen hours of chores was the average per month (the minimum was 1 hour and the maximum was 40 hours). Three villages did not require their residents to perform chores.

The duration of time that the housing is provided for residents is also an important component of the model. The tiny house villages surveyed provide both transitional and permanent housing. Eight villages indicated that they provide *transitional housing*<sup>26</sup> and 7 indicated that they provide *permanent housing*<sup>27</sup> (villages were allowed to select more than one option in response to this question). Of the villages that provide *transitional housing*, 2 villages indicated that there is no limit to the number of days that tenants are allowed to stay, 1 village indicated that the maximum stay is 84 days, 2 villages indicated that the maximum stay is 2 years, and 1 village indicated that the maximum stay is 2 years but that the time limit is not enforced in practice. Of the villages that provide *permanent housing*, 1 indicated that they do have a rent-to-own model in place, and 5 villages indicated that they do not have a rent-to-own model in place (resident rent their unit indefinitely).

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<sup>26</sup> Transitional housing is defined as housing offered with support services for a defined period of time to facilitate movement to independent living.

<sup>27</sup> Permanent housing is defined as housing offered with support services with no time limit.

A discussion of local government involvement and barriers facing tiny house villages is provided in the next section. A discussion of additional applications of Heben’s model – including encampments, Accessory Dwelling Units, and micro-units – all being pursued as tiny house types to address homelessness, is provided in the “Applications of the Tiny House Model” section of this report. The full data from the survey conducted for this report of 11 tiny house villages that serve homeless individuals can be found in Appendix A.

### Challenges and Support for Tiny House Villages

A survey conducted for this report of 11 tiny house villages that serve homeless individuals across the U.S. asked tiny house villages to rank the level of difficulty of each step in the process of building their tiny house village on a scale of 1-10.

*Table 3. How difficult was each step of the process of building your tiny house community?*

Step in Process of Building Tiny house Village	Mean Response (0= no difficulty; 10 = extremely difficult)	# of Responses from Villages
Operational/Management	7.6	8
Governance	6.6	7
Permitting	6.6	7
Fundraising	5.8	9
Zoning	5.7	7
Constructing	4.4	8
Designing	4.3	7

Table 3 above shows the results of that ranking, with Operational/Management issues ranked the highest level of difficulty (7.6), followed by Governance (6.6) and Permitting (6.6), Fundraising (5.8), Zoning (5.7), Constructing (4.4), and Designing (4.3).

Separately, a little over half of the tiny house villages surveyed for this report indicated that they did receive support from the city or county (5 villages did and 4 indicated that they did not receive support). Public support for those villages that did receive it most often came in the form of waived development fees and city council approval. Other types of support included favorable city ordinances, development financing, donated land, leased land, an operating subsidy, grants, approval from a board of supervisors, having a city staff person as a point person to navigate needs, and working with the transportation authority to run a bus line to the village.

In some cases, tiny house villages have had to be proactive about gaining zoning approval from local government: one village requested a planning commission designation and had to go through city council approval. Another village has approval to use commercially and industrially zoned land but is requesting an ordinance change to allow for residentially-zoned land, and a separate ordinance for their religiously-affiliated properties. One village received a conditional use permit for their site.

Several local challenges have been overcome. Tiny house villages provided the following description of challenges (edited for clarity):

- **“We had to set up an emergency permitting process** for the construction and inspection of shower facilities and bathroom facilities, which the City's construction and inspections department (SDCI) were accommodating with. This program piggy backs on decades of city opposition to illegal tent city encampments - much of the progress that we have seen is a result of advocacy efforts from those in the "unhoused" community who have pushed for sanctioned spaces to exist.”
- **“There had to be coordinated cooperation with city public safety.** Also, California Housing Authority threatened to shut down our effort because we did not clear our efforts through them, and they felt the units did not meet their standards. We explained the units were "emergency shelters." Our Board approved an Emergency Declarations that offset their concerns.”
- **“In addition to the above options listed in this survey, we encountered neighborhood concerns.** We overcame these obstacles via seemingly endless meetings with city, county, commissions, and neighbors. To answer these questions in depth would require writing a book.”
- **“We had to go through the County Commissioners Court** but it was a perfunctory vote which went unanimous in our favor.”
- **“General design requirement parameters.** We included specific design requirements that were approved by the building inspector within the contract. As long as we stick to these, we don't need to pull permits for any individual structure.”

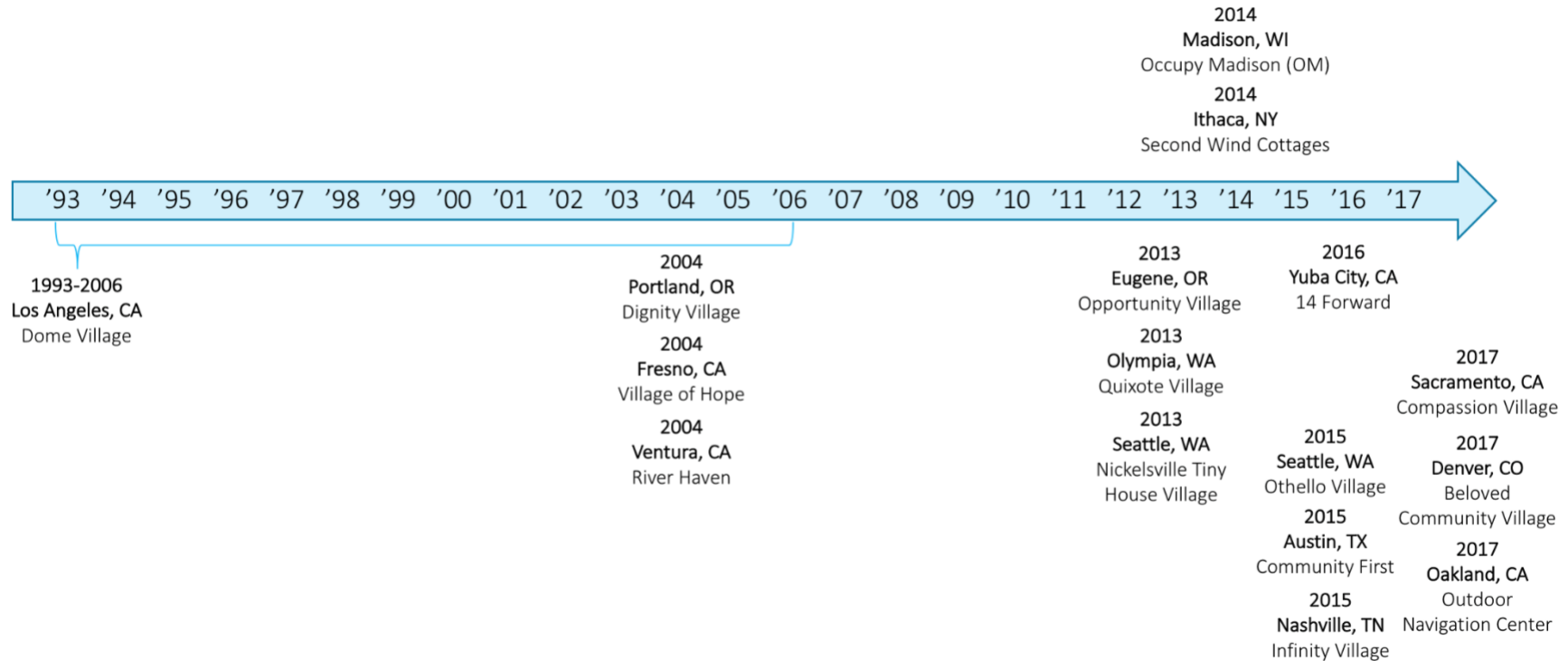
## Recent Legislation and Trends

This section provides an overview of the recent trend of developing tiny house villages across the United States and California, including a timeline of village construction and description of recent legislation easing the way for tiny houses.



### Tiny House Villages for the Homeless: U.S. Timeline

The tiny house for homeless movement is growing. At least 75% of tiny house villages in the U.S. were built in 2013 or later. The below timeline shows the start dates and locations of some of the most prominent sanctioned tiny house villages for homeless individuals.



*Figure 4. U.S. Tiny House Villages for Homeless Timeline*

Sources: dates compiled in response to “What year was the first tiny home built in your community?” question in survey of tiny house communities that serve homeless households conducted for this report in summer 2017; “Othello Village,” Low Income Housing Institute. Retrieved April 2018 from: <https://lihi.org/tiny-houses/othello-village/>; “6 micro houses for Nashville homeless find permanent space.” Jessica Bliss, Tennessean. August 21, 2015. Retrieved April 2018 from: <https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/2015/08/21/6-micro-houses-homeless-find-permanent-space/32018199/>; “New tiny houses crop up in the Nickelsville Georgetown village.” Sarah Anne Lloyd, Curbed Seattle. June 12, 2017. Retrieved April 2018 from: <https://seattle.curbed.com/2017/6/12/15776206/tiny-houses-nickelsville-georgetown-homeless/>; “Beloved Community Village.” Colorado Village Collaborative. Retrieved April 2018 from: <https://www.coloradvillagecollaborative.org/beloved-community-village/>.

The first tiny house village for the homeless, Dome Village in Los Angeles, California, was built in 1993 but was demolished in 2006. The 35 men, women, and children who had lived there were evicted when the owner of the property raised the monthly lease to a level that was unaffordable for the village, from \$2,500 a month to \$18,330 a month for the whole property.<sup>28</sup> This issue, coupled with the threat of displacement of mobile home parks in high cost areas that will be described in more detail in the “Applications of the Tiny House Model” section of this report, may be important to consider as a potential challenge to the model. Community land trust models or city ownership of the land may be important considerations for long-term sustainability.

### Trend Across California

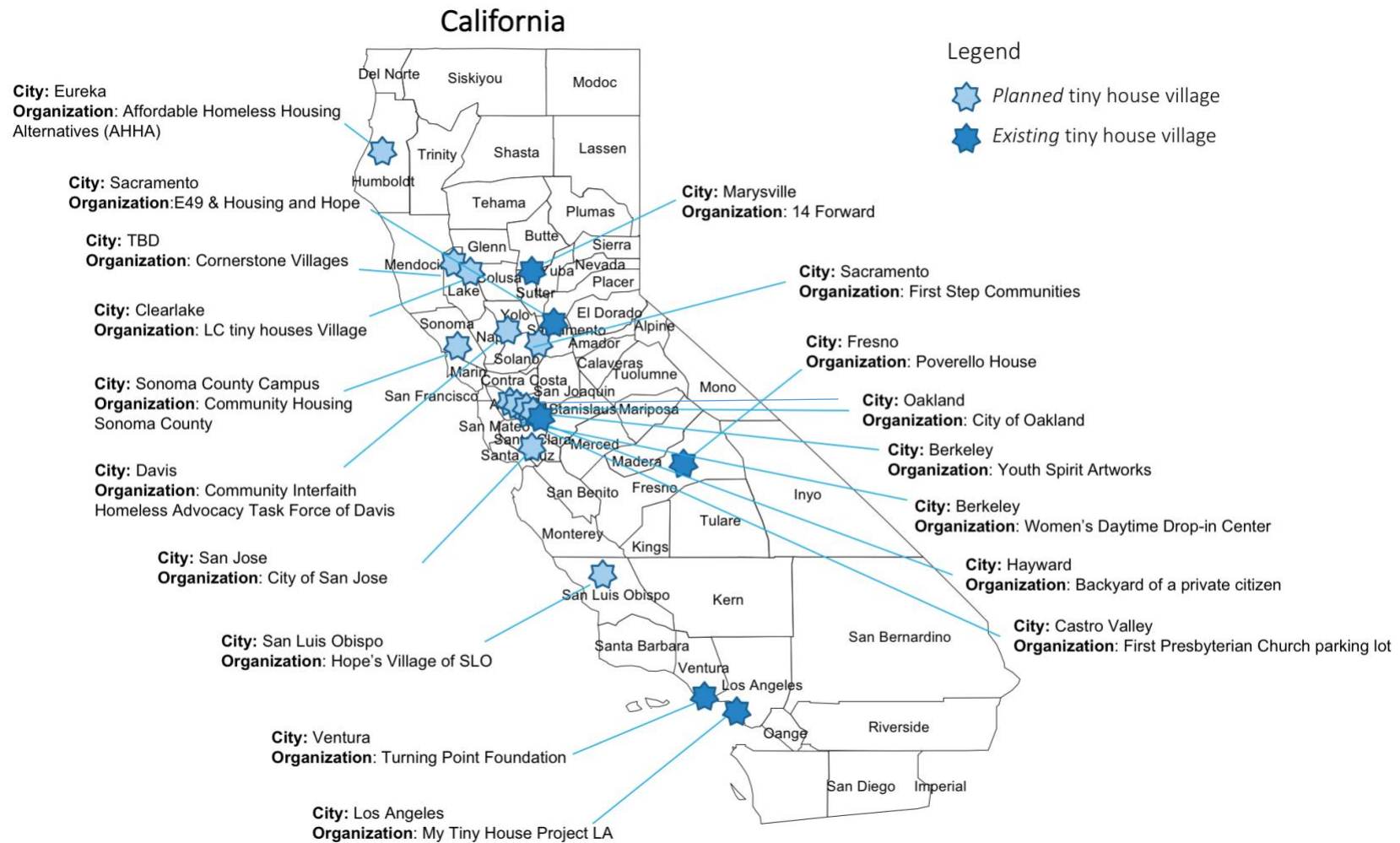
The tiny house movement for the homeless is growing in California: Map 1 below shows a predicted growth from 6 existing to 18 total developments of free standing tiny houses of varying construction types from 2004 into the foreseeable future if all planned developments are completed (the timeline of each planned development is unknown). Data on sites was taken from a website called The Village Collaborative<sup>29</sup> and supplemented with information from secondary sources and interviews. Because some of the information is crowdsourced, these numbers are approximate, but still tell a story about the growing popularity of the trend. Developments were excluded from the map below if the mission was stated as providing low cost housing but not targeted toward homelessness. For planned developments, outreach to each site would need to be conducted to determine progress and timeline.

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<sup>28</sup> “Prejudice.” Ted Hayes, LA’s Homeless Blog. December 28, 2005. Retrieved April 2018 from:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20060624124917/http://www.ePATH.org:80/blog/2005/12/dome-village-directed-by-hayes-fights.htm>.

<sup>29</sup> The Village Collaborative website has a map that crowdsources information on where people are either in the planning or development stage, or if they have completed the village.



*Map 1. Tiny Houses for the Homeless in California: Planned and Existing as of 2018*

Sources: The Village Collaborative, <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1ka5rY5f6uM14l1xobWYUBE15G0E&ll=42.330511100000024%2C-76.61816550000003&z=8>, Retrieved April 14, 2018; "10 tiny house villages for the homeless across the U.S.," <https://www.curbed.com/maps/tiny-houses-for-the-homeless-villages>, Retrieved April 14, 2018; "Yuba County homeless become 'tiny house' residents," Sacramento Bee, <http://www.sacbee.com/news/local/article89968682.html>, Retrieved April 14, 2018; "At River Haven in Ventura, domes near end of Life," VC Star, <https://www.vcstar.com/story/news/local/communities/ventura/2017/11/28/river-haven-ventura-residences-near-shelf-life/860331001/>, Retrieved April 14, 2018; "Companion Village," Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/compassionvillage/>, Retrieved April 14, 2018; Poverello House, <https://www.poverellohouse.org/what-we-do/shelter>, Accessed April 14, 2018.

## Recent Regulatory Changes in California

While tiny houses are theoretically cheaper and faster to build than conventional housing, state and local building codes, local zoning and permitting requirements, and lack of clarity about the definition of tiny houses have the potential to up-end those benefits. In some cases, people have found creative loopholes to bypass these issues – most commonly, by putting the tiny house on wheels so that the house does not have to be built to conventional housing standards.<sup>30</sup> In addition, recent legislation is increasingly easing the way for tiny houses in California, especially in the form of emergency bridge housing for the homeless and for building Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). The table below provides a timeline of recent regulatory changes in California organized by date, location, and tiny house type.

*Table 4. Timeline of Regulatory Changes in California*

Date	Location	Type: Tiny House	Type: Regulatory	Description
April 2012	Sonoma County, CA	Tiny house on wheels	Zoning	Outlines requirements for residential uses of travel trailer or Recreational Vehicles (RVs). <sup>31</sup>
November 2015	Fresno, CA	Tiny house on wheels	Building code	The Fresno City Council puts tiny houses on wheels into the building code – a first for a large American city. <sup>32</sup>
February 2016	California (state-wide)	Tiny houses	Definition	California’s Department of Housing and Community Development releases a memo on Tiny houses that intended to “clarify the legality of use, design and construction approval of any residential structure that may be commonly referred to as a tiny house.” <sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Tiny houses that are built on a permanent foundation are subject to California Building Code standards, while tiny houses that are built on a chassis with wheels are classified by the state as either a Recreational Vehicle (RV), Camping Cabin (CC) or Park Trailer (PT) and subject to review by a different agency. For example, a developer of a tiny house on wheels aspiring for RV classification must construct the tiny house to different standards than conventional housing: the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), and then certified by a third-party agency such as the Recreational Vehicle Industry Association (RVIA). However, State HCD Codes and Standards Administrator Henry Greene stated on a phone call on June 26, 2018 that while State HCD does not have jurisdiction over these units, they do have the authority to prohibit occupancy of a structure if the structure is not certified.

<sup>31</sup> “Zoning Rules Allow Little Houses.” Little Houses on the Trailer. April 17, 2012. Retrieved April 2018 from: <https://littlehouseonthetrailer.com/blog/zoning-rules-allow-little-houses/>.

<sup>32</sup> “With laws changing, tiny houses may have a big effect on housing.” Sam Omar Hall, Richmond Confidential. April 13, 2016. Retrieved April 2018 from: <http://richmondconfidential.org/2016/04/13/with-laws-changing-tiny-homes-may-have-a-big-effect-on-housing/>.

<sup>33</sup> “Tiny houses” Information Bulletin. California Department of Housing and Community Development. May 9, 2016. Retrieved April 2018 from: <http://www.hcd.ca.gov/docs/IB2016-01.pdf>.

<b>September 2016</b>	San Jose, CA	Emergency bridge housing for the homeless	Bypass compliance with state and local building, housing, health, habitability, or safety standards and laws until sunset date	California Assembly Bill No. 2176 authorizes, until January 1, 2022, upon a declaration of a shelter crisis by the City of San Jose emergency housing to include an emergency bridge housing community for the homeless. The bill defines emergency bridge housing community to include, but not be limited to, housing in temporary structures including, but not limited to, emergency sleeping cabins, as defined. The bill, in lieu of compliance with state and local building, housing, health, habitability, or safety standards and laws, would authorize the city to adopt by ordinance reasonable local standards for emergency bridge housing communities, as specified. <sup>34</sup>
<b>January 1, 2017</b>	California (state-wide)	Tiny houses	Building code	California adopts the new code standards made by the International Code Council (ICC) <sup>35</sup> reducing the required size for a habitable room from 120 to 70 sf. <sup>36</sup>
<b>January 1, 2017</b>	California (state-wide)	Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)	New regulatory framework	California Assembly Bill No. 2299 authorizes the legislative body of a city or county to regulate, among other things, the intensity of land use, and also authorizes a local agency to provide by ordinance for the creation of 2nd units in single-family and multifamily residential zones, as specified. <sup>37</sup>
<b>October 2017</b>	City of Berkeley, Emeryville, Los Angeles, Oakland, or San Diego, the County of Santa Clara, or the City and County of San Francisco	Emergency bridge housing for the homeless	Bypass compliance with state and local building, housing, health, habitability, or safety standards and laws until sunset date	California Assembly Bill No. 932 authorizes, until January 1, 2021, upon a declaration of a shelter crisis by the City of Berkeley, Emeryville, Los Angeles, Oakland, or San Diego, the County of Santa Clara, or the City and County of San Francisco, emergency housing to include homeless shelters in those cities. The bill, in lieu of compliance with local building approval procedures or state housing, health, habitability, planning and zoning, or safety standards, procedures, and laws, would

<sup>34</sup> “AB-2176 Shelter crisis: emergency bridge housing communities.” Approved by Governor September 27, 2016. Filed with Secretary of State September 27, 2016. California Legislative Information. Retrieved April 2018 from: [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201520160AB2176](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB2176).

<sup>35</sup> The ICC is based in Washington DC and writes building codes adopted by many states and cities.

<sup>36</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International\\_Building\\_Code](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Building_Code)

<sup>37</sup> “AB-2299 Land use: housing: 2nd units.” Approved by Governor September 27, 2016. Filed with Secretary of State September 27, 2016.” California Legislative Information. Retrieved April 2018 from: [http://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201520160AB2299](http://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB2299).

				authorize those jurisdictions to adopt by ordinance reasonable local standards for homeless shelters. <sup>38</sup>
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Jay Shafer built his tiny house on wheels in 1999 as a way to get around building requirements for houses on permanent foundations. Shafer’s tiny house on wheels kicked off a trend and led many people to think of tiny houses as synonymous with tiny houses on wheels. When Fresno put tiny houses on wheels into the building code in November 2015, this was celebrated because they were the first American city to do this. At the same time, there were concerns among residents in Fresno, documented by the newspaper Richmond Confidential, about the new code being too narrow and therefore excluding many of the tiny houses being built and used.<sup>39</sup>

When the California State Housing and Community Development Department (State HCD) released its memo in February 2016 to “clarify the legality of use, design and construction approval of any residential structure that may be commonly referred to as a tiny house,” it stated that a tiny house that is built on a chassis with axles does not fall under HCD’s jurisdiction. If the tiny house is placed on a permanent foundation then it must comply with California Building Standard Commission Codes or Factory Built Housing standards.<sup>40</sup> The change to the California building code reducing the required size for a habitable room from 120 to 70-square feet did not go into effect until January 1, 2017.<sup>41</sup>

Among the biggest challenges in building tiny houses, and in particular with tiny houses for the homeless, is where to locate them.<sup>42</sup> San Jose was the first city in California to pass a bill through the California state legislature (AB 2176, approved in September 2016) authorizing the city to bypass compliance with state and local building, housing, health, habitability, or safety in order to build emergency bridge housing for the homeless. The first site proposed for homeless housing in San Jose was zoned for agriculture with

<sup>38</sup> “AB -932 Shelter crisis: homeless shelters.” Approved by Governor October 14, 2017. Filed with Secretary of State October 14, 2017. California Legislative Information. Retrieved April 2018 from: [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201720180AB932](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB932).

<sup>39</sup> “With laws changing, tiny houses may have a big effect on housing.” Sam Omar Hall, Richmond Confidential. April 13, 2016. Retrieved April 2018 from: <http://richmondconfidential.org/2016/04/13/with-laws-changing-tiny-homes-may-have-a-big-effect-on-housing/>.

<sup>40</sup> “Tiny houses” Information Bulletin. California Department of Housing and Community Development. May 9, 2016. Retrieved April 2018 from: <http://www.hcd.ca.gov/docs/IB2016-01.pdf>.

<sup>41</sup> “With laws changing, tiny houses may have a big effect on housing.” Sam Omar Hall, Richmond Confidential. April 13, 2016. Retrieved April 2018 from: <http://richmondconfidential.org/2016/04/13/with-laws-changing-tiny-homes-may-have-a-big-effect-on-housing/>.

<sup>42</sup> In a survey of tiny house villages for homeless individuals across the U.S. conducted for this report, use types that the villages are classified as include: emergency owned shelter, county-owned property, mixed use planned development (acquired through a special zoning permit), Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) for a village in Texas, homeless shelter, designated campground, church, and RV park.

compliance sought through considering a number of rezoning options, but ultimately the city was able to bypass these challenges because of AB 2176.<sup>43</sup>

In October 2017, a similar bill as San Jose's, AB-932, passed through the California State legislature authorizing the City of Berkeley, Emeryville, Los Angeles, Oakland, or San Diego, the County of Santa Clara, or the City and County of San Francisco, to declare a shelter crisis for emergency housing for homeless shelters. The legislation required that the cities and counties named in the bill submit emergency housing building standards to HCD for review. This past spring, new emergency housing standards that were added as appendices to the 2016 CA Building Code and CA Residential Code now provide cities and counties with consistent minimum standards for emergency housing to adopt locally.<sup>44</sup> To invoke the new emergency standards a local ordinance must be passed declaring an emergency housing crisis for the new emergency building standards, and a local re-zoning may be necessary. In some cases, local officials may partially adopt the minimum standards, for example the City of Berkeley chose to enforce local fire code in the construction of the new STAIR Center, a homeless navigation center that opened in June 2018.

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<sup>43</sup> Rezoning options considered included changing the development to a "temporary labor camp" allowed by current zoning, changing the zoning to be Mixed Use or residential, or creating an overlay zoning for emergency bridge housing in agricultural zones subject to a Mixed Use permit. From email exchange with Jerry Wilburn, Masters of Urban Planning graduate student at San Jose State University and intern, City of San Jose Department of Housing. April 17, 2018.

<sup>44</sup> "Emergency Housing – Adoption of Emergency Regulations." May 9, 2018 Information Bulletin. California Department of Housing and Community Development. <http://www.hcd.ca.gov/docs/IB2018-01.pdf>

## Alameda County Case Studies

Case studies were compiled to provide a deeper understanding of some of the current aspirations, challenges, and opportunities for tiny house villages for homeless individuals in Alameda County. Examples from Oakland, Berkeley, and Hayward are included in this section because 75% of the county's unsheltered homeless population currently live in these cities. A project underway in Unincorporated Alameda County was also included because of a recent funding request to the County. Efforts from across sectors are represented in the examples included below: public sector, educational, nonprofit, faith-based, and a private landlord.

### Oakland

With the largest homeless population of any city in Alameda County, Oakland has gone further than any other city in the county to address homelessness through tiny houses. Oakland had 859 sheltered and 1,902 unsheltered individuals according to the 2017 Alameda County Point-in-Time Survey and up to 2-3 times more individuals likely experiencing homelessness than the official count. The City's Outdoor Navigation Center that launched in December 2017 is comprised of 20 Tuff Sheds and provides insight into some of the successes and challenges associated with implementing a tiny house village model. Oakland's Laney College made headlines in 2016 when it received many distinctions at a prestigious competition in Sacramento. The community college now has a contract with the City of Oakland to build tiny houses for homeless individuals and is iterating its model and construction practices so that it is serviceable on the ground.

"Tuff Sheds" Outdoor Navigation Center at 6<sup>th</sup> and Castro Streets, Oakland, CA

#### *Overview*

Fresno, California was the first city in California to use Tuff Shed-like structures for homeless individuals. Fresno's tiny house community, called the Village of Hope, was started in 2004 by an organization called the Poverello House. Use of Tuff Sheds (Tuff Sheds are both a company and a brand), or Tuff Shed-like structures – originally intended for use as a garden toolshed – is spreading to communities who want to address homelessness Yuba City in California also uses them, and River Haven in Ventura is considering replacing their aging U-Domes with Tuff Sheds.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> "At River Haven in Ventura, domes near end of life." Arlene Martinez, VC Star. November 28, 2017. Retrieved April 2018 from: <https://www.vcstar.com/story/news/local/communities/ventura/2017/11/28/river-haven-ventura-residences-near-shelf-life/860331001/>.



Emergency shelter crisis declaration, rather than tiny house classification, was the key planning lever that enabled the City of Oakland to build the Tuff Sheds. Talia Rubin, LCSW, a program analyst who oversees the Tuff Sheds for the City of Oakland, explained in a conversation on June 21, 2018 that declaring a shelter crisis helped to fast track the project through engaging a combination of the following levers:

- AB-932 Shelter crisis: homeless shelters<sup>46</sup> followed by a City ordinance declaring an emergency shelter crisis that passed through the Oakland City Council;<sup>47</sup> and
- The City of Oakland updated its Planning Code on July 15, 2014 to comply with California State Law Senate Bill 2, 2007, (SB 2). SB 2 requiring cities to permit emergency shelters in at least one zoning district without a conditional use permit or other discretionary action.<sup>48</sup>

Emergency housing is a new classification added as an appendix to the 2016 California Building Code and the 2016 California Residential Code in April 2018. These emergency regulations provide a consistent minimum standard by which local agencies may develop emergency housing or shelter ordinances including for homeless individuals, including tiny houses. The guidelines provide flexibility to determine the type of housing. “Emergency housing” is defined as housing in a permanent or temporary structures occupied during a declaration of state of emergency, local emergency, or shelter crisis. Emergency housing may include, but is not limited to, buildings and structures constructed in accordance with the California Building Standards Code; and emergency sleeping cabins, emergency transportable housing units, and tents constructed and/or assembled.<sup>49</sup>

On December 4, 2017, the City of Oakland opened the Outdoor Navigation Center on 6<sup>th</sup> and Castro Streets in West Oakland on a lot leased by the city from PG&E for a year and half. The City contracted with a nonprofit, Operation Dignity, to manage the Center for a cost of \$585,000 from 11/17/2017 to 6/30/2019. The Center is comprised of 20 Tuff Sheds, with an occupancy hovering around 35 – full capacity is 40 residents with a maximum of 2 residents per Tuff Shed. The Center is intended to provide transitional shelter. Residents stay for up to 90 days before they undergo a reassessment to determine if they would benefit from a maximum stay at the Center of 6 months. One case worker is assigned to all 40 residents, and residents are transitioned to appropriate transitional or permanent housing following their stay at the Outdoor Navigation Center.

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<sup>46</sup> “AB-932 Shelter crisis: homeless shelters.” [https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201720180AB932](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB932)

<sup>47</sup> “City council unanimously passes ordinance declaring a shelter crisis in Oakland.” October 4, 2017, Oakland North. <https://oaklandnorth.net/2017/10/04/city-council-unanimously-passes-ordinance-declaring-a-shelter-crisis-in-oakland/>

<sup>48</sup> “City of Oakland Emergency Shelter & Transitional Housing Zoning Update.” <http://www2.oaklandnet.com/Government/o/PBN/OurOrganization/PlanningZoning/oak043562>

<sup>49</sup> “Emergency Housing – Adoption of Emergency Regulations Effective April 18, 2018, 2016 California Building Code, 2016 California Residential Code.” California HCD Information Bulletin. May 9, 2018. <http://www.hcd.ca.gov/docs/IB2018-01.pdf>

Current residents were selected in a targeted geographic approach: homeless individuals closest to the site (bounded by 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> to the west and the east and Castro and Market to the north and south) were offered a spot first. As residents are transitioned out of the site, the geographic radius of who will be eligible to live at the Center will expand. (Eight residents have already been transitioned to other housing, according to Lester Vender, Site Manager/Outreach Coordinator for the Outdoor Navigation Center.) All of the current residents are adults (there are no children), and includes both couples and singles. Approximately 75% of the residents are male, with one transgender resident and the remaining female. Residents are predominately African American, with a smaller proportion Asian and White. Image 1 below depicting the Tuff Shed units was taken outside of the gates of the Outdoor Navigation Center because taking photos within the gates would have violated Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPPA) privacy rules for homeless clients living in the Navigation Center.



*Image 1. Tuff Sheds at 6th and Castro Streets, Oakland, CA. February 26, 2018.*

The Outdoor Navigation Center provides residents with some amenities. Each unit is equipped with a fire extinguisher, insulation, cots, and bins for storage. Because of the transitional nature of the facility, residents are not allowed to personalize the outside of their shed (“the more stuff you put up, the more stuff that you’ll have to take down anyways” according to Lester Vender, Site Manager/Outreach Coordinator during an interview for this report in February 2018. Lester is employed by Operation Dignity, one of two nonprofits contracted to run the Center by the City). But some residents have gotten creative with decorating the interiors of their sheds to make it look and feel more homelike.

Portable restrooms are available for common use, and a tented communal area with long white plastic tables provides a place for meals and community meetings. Regular services are provided to residents in the Center: regular trash pickups, a medical services van every Monday. On Tuesdays and Fridays residents can take showers, and soft breakfasts like pastries and oatmeal are served. Dinners are prepped two blocks away by a veterans services group. Workforce development services, like job interview practice and clothes for interviews is provided. At the end of the day, security is likely one of the most important services. Visitors are not allowed between the hours of 8pm-5am.

Despite the fact that the site is being leased from PG&E, a portable generator provides electricity to common areas but not individual sheds, and two solar panels are available for charging phones. The Center is in talks with the City about getting power, according to Lester, but the Tuff Sheds are not pre-wired for electricity. A resident interviewed for this report described the challenge of sleeping and waking based on sunlight, and said that many residents use candles even though they are technically prohibited.

### *Challenges*

The central questions raised by the Outdoor Navigation Center are: what is an acceptable living standard for transitional shelters? Do the Tuff Sheds provide a humane way to house individuals temporarily? A majority of homeless individuals in the targeted geographic area have chosen to move in (Lester estimated the number to be 80%). But there was resistance at first. Lester shared that when the site first opened it was perceived as an “internment camp.” “It’s gated. It looks like a prison,” some said. There was a slow transition to folks moving in. For homeless individuals who will not accept the rules, for example the rule of no visitors in units, the Center is not a good choice.

Earlier this year, the East Bay Express reported that a Special Rapporteur for the United Nations had visited the Center and encampments in Oakland and reported that she did not find them acceptable:

*"Imagine being a woman who is menstruating and having to go into one of the porta-potties," – Leilani Farha, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, after a visit to Oakland's homeless encampments.<sup>50</sup>*

As the United Nations representative pointed out, a woman living in a transitional community that is predominately male would likely experience unique challenges. When asked what it's like to be a female resident there, Arie Murphy (an assumed name), a white 46-year-old female interviewed for this report in April 2018, said, "I'm pretty assertive when it comes to guys here so they don't like me but I like it that way. It might be harder if I weren't more assertive. Nothing's been done, but some of the guys here are sort of creepy."

An additional concern is what it feels like to live with a roommate. Arie described how her boyfriend who she had shared a unit with had recently been jailed, and she wondered how a new roommate would be selected. While efforts were made to pair individuals with people they knew prior to living at the Center, she was not sure how she would get along with a new roommate living in such close quarters.

Beyond these dynamics, the Center is facing some significant operational and implementation challenges. Lester Vender, Site Manager/Outreach Coordinator, pointed out that the layout for the site creates some blind spots, a challenge for dealing with domestic and neighbor disputes and altercations which he said happen daily. He suggested that a circular or linear arrangement would allow him to better manage the site. Figure 5 below shows the current arrangement of Tuff Sheds with the manager's cabin indicated in an orange box in the south west quadrant of the site.

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<sup>50</sup> "United Nations Expert Describes Oakland and California's Homeless Crisis as 'Cruel.'" Darwin Bond Graham, East Bay Express. January 21, 2018. Retrieved April 2018 from: <https://www.eastbayexpress.com/SevenDays/archives/2018/01/21/united-nations-expert-describes-oakland-and-californias-homeless-crisis-as-cruel>.

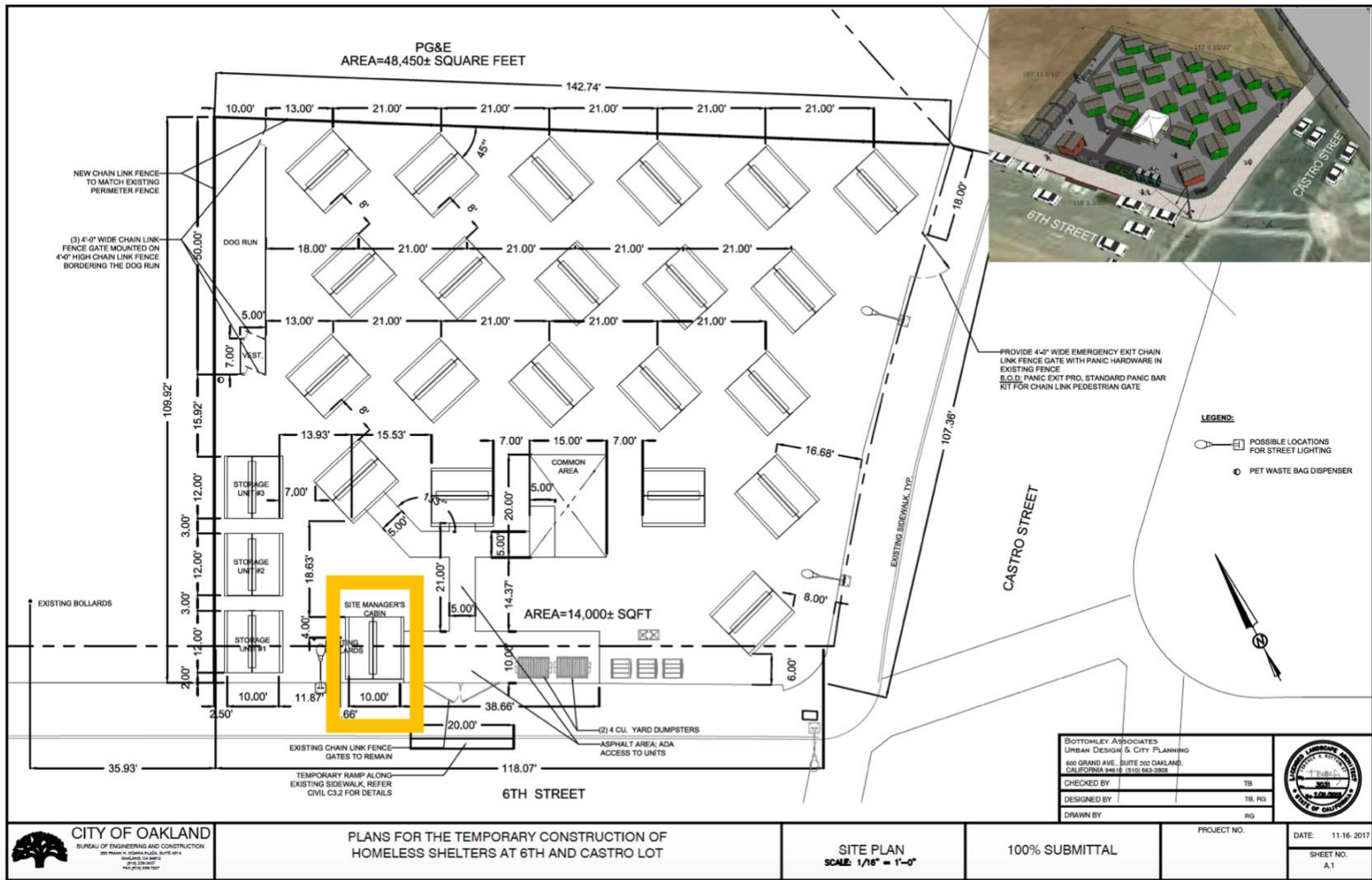


Figure 5. City of Oakland Plans for 6th and Castro Lot.

Source: City of Oakland

A housing coordinator who had been responsible for managing the case load for all 35 residents had recently been fired before the nonprofits managing the Center had the opportunity to fill the role with a new person. Arie shared that the housing coordinator had had “no follow through...A caseload of 40 needy people is really hard. All of us need something at all times. We need something to push us along a little bit. That’s the nature. If they say we’re going to do something then actually do it.” In spite of not being provided case management services, an eviction notice had been posted on her door because she had recently reached her 90 days at the Center. Lester acknowledged that “Residents get burned when there is no proper turnover.”

Oakland recently completed its second Tuff Shed community for homeless individuals in May 2018 that follows a transitional shelter model and incorporates lessons learned from the first site. The site is 28,000 square feet (half of which is developed, leaving room to grow based on the needs of the community) at Northgate and 27th off of the I-980 and to the west of the Grand Lake neighborhood in Oakland. The new site has better insulation, three double pane windows per unit, electricity to power a light and charge residents’ cell phones, and an improved layout that includes Tuff Sheds lined up around the perimeter rather than in rows. The cost was almost \$1 million, including \$175,000 for the Tuff Sheds (donated by Sutter Medical Group), \$550,000 for onsite staffing and services, and a \$125,000 fund to help residents find permanent housing. These funds came entirely from outside donors, and the City has an indefinite lease term on the land. Details on the Northgate site were provided by an interview conducted by Manuel Corona, an undergraduate at UC Berkeley, with Talia Yaffa Rubin, LCSW, a program analyst in the City of Oakland Human Services Department on April 9, 2018 and then shared for this report. Additional details come from an article in The Mercury News.<sup>51</sup>

## Laney College, Oakland, CA

### *Overview*

In 2016 Laney College made local headlines when a class of students with faculty support were award-winning net zero tiny house that beat out other schools in the categories of best architecture, design, furniture, landscaping, and video at the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) Tiny House Competition. The Wedge, Laney’s winning design, is 200 square feet on a 20-foot trailer with roof-mounted solar panels, two bedrooms with the potential to sleep a third, a full bathroom, kitchen, and custom made furniture.<sup>52</sup> Laney College paid for the cost of building The Wedge upfront, spending approximately \$32,000 on materials (some

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<sup>51</sup> “Homeless greet Oakland’s new Tuff Sheds with hesitation, hope.” The Mercury News. May 8, 2018. Retrieved August 2018 from: <https://www.mercurynews.com/2018/05/08/homeless-greet-new-tuff-sheds-with-hesitation-hope/>.

<sup>52</sup> “Wedge by Laney College.” Tiny Living. 2016. Retrieved April 2018 from: <https://tinyliving.com/wedge-laney-college/>.

materials like windows and batteries were donated). After the competition, Laney College sold it for \$47,000 and paid the money that they made back into their foundation.

### *Next Steps*

The Wedge was just the start of Laney College’s work in the area of tiny houses. Now they are working on a prototype called The Pocket House for homeless individuals. Laney has been working since spring 2017 on two versions of The Pocket House (one built on a 16-foot trailer that has a kitchen and a bathroom and one that is a studio built on a 12-foot trailer) with a grant from the City of Oakland. According to Matthew Wolpe, a faculty member at Laney College who led The Wedge design process, the prototypes are “meant for a village situation...that could be situated with a handful of other tiny houses.”

### *Challenges*

A key challenge is maintaining the right balance between fulfilling Laney’s educational mission to build shelters that are sophisticated enough for students to learn carpentry skills with the demand for low-cost structures to address homelessness. For example, while Tuff Sheds cost \$4,300 each, The Pocket House cost \$20K to build. Ultimately Laney is aiming to build panelized small structures that are better designed than Tuff Sheds, not on a trailer, and built with simple tools so that people in Oakland could be paid to build them rather than a “super optimized factory somewhere.” Laney’s challenge will be to figure out how to pare down the price and get to a product that they feel good about.

### *Berkeley*

With the second highest number of homeless individuals in Alameda County (664 unsheltered and 308 sheltered based on data from the 2017 Alameda County Point-in-Time Survey and up to 2-3 times more individuals likely experiencing homelessness than the official count), the City of Berkeley is perhaps putting the most energy into its ambitious Pathways Project. If completed as planned, the Pathways Project would attempt to address the needs of 1,000 homeless individuals in Berkeley. Part of the plan had originally called for adopting tiny house village-like facilities with some communal responsibilities based on existing models, but no tiny houses were incorporated into the STAIR Center, Berkeley’s new homeless navigation center in West Berkeley that opened in June 2018.<sup>53</sup> The City

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<sup>53</sup> “Addressing Berkeley’s Homeless Crisis: The Pathways Project.” From Mayor Jesse Arreguin and Councilmembers Sophie Hahn, Linda Maio and Kriss Worthington to members of the Berkeley City Council. April 4, 2017. Retrieved April 2018 from: [https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:EKotL\\_yK-7IJ:https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City\\_Council/2017/04\\_Apr/Documents/2017-04-04\\_Item\\_27\\_Addressing\\_Berkeley%25E2%2580%2599s\\_Homeless\\_Crisis\\_The\\_Pathways\\_Project.aspx+%&cd=2&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us](https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:EKotL_yK-7IJ:https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City_Council/2017/04_Apr/Documents/2017-04-04_Item_27_Addressing_Berkeley%25E2%2580%2599s_Homeless_Crisis_The_Pathways_Project.aspx+%&cd=2&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us).

voted to allocate over \$2.5M to the project in March 2018.<sup>54</sup> The Berkeley City Council has also expressed interest in prefab micro-units, passing an initiative to house 100 homeless people in early 2017 but without choosing a developer.<sup>55</sup> In the meantime, the nonprofit Youth Spirit Artworks is attempting to build the first tiny houses youth village in the county. The case study below tells the story of their efforts.<sup>56</sup>

Youth Spirit Artworks (YSA), Berkeley, CA

### *Overview*

Youth Spirit Artworks (YSA) is an interfaith “green” art jobs and job training program founded in 2007 to help homeless and low-income people in the Bay Area between 16-25 years of age. YSA serves approximately 150 youth are served per year from shelters, transitional housing, legal agencies, and high schools. YSA uses art as a vehicle to teach jobs readiness, with youth earning up to \$1K per month for participating in studio and community art projects – such as the eight murals on YSA’s block – and art sales where youth can sell work and make 50% of the proceeds from the sales. YSA also prepares youth for entering six additional vocational pathways: journalism, nonprofit management, community organizing, social media, social services, and social work.

According to Youth Spirit Artworks (YSA) Executive Director Sally Hindman, the idea for a youth tiny house village came about during a rainy El Nino winter two years ago. Youth slept on a church floor at night, but then they would be let out with no place to go until 8pm, even on rainy days (the church was only able to offer shelter during the night). YSA filled the gap with a youth winter warming program during the rainy days with activities and food. They started having conversations with the youths about what they needed. Several youths shared that they had been in the same situation for two years and were not getting placed because there was no housing available.

By the spring of 2016, YSA started getting organized. YSA held meetings about the tiny house village, setting the goal that to build 100 homes for homeless youths over 10 years. Fifty of those units would be traditional affordable housing, with 25 tiny houses configured as a tiny house village. YSA visited other projects to get a better idea of what they wanted and then contracted with an architect to

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<sup>54</sup> “Opinion: Arreguin’s ‘Pathways’ project is Berkeley’s pathway to gentrification.” Vinay Pai, Berkeleyside. April 13, 2018. Retrieved April 2018 from:

<http://www.berkeleyside.com/2018/04/13/opinion-arreguins-pathways-project-is-berkeleys-pathway-to-gentrification>.

<sup>55</sup> “Berkeley Approves Tiny Houses for the Homeless.” Joe Kukur, SF Weekly. February 15, 2017. Retrieved April 2018 from

<http://www.sfweekly.com/news/berkeley-approves-tiny-houses-for-the-homeless/>.

<sup>56</sup> “Berkeley nonprofit attempts to build first ‘tiny house youth village’ in the U.S.” Daphne White, Berkeleyside. November 17, 2017. Retrieved April 2018 from

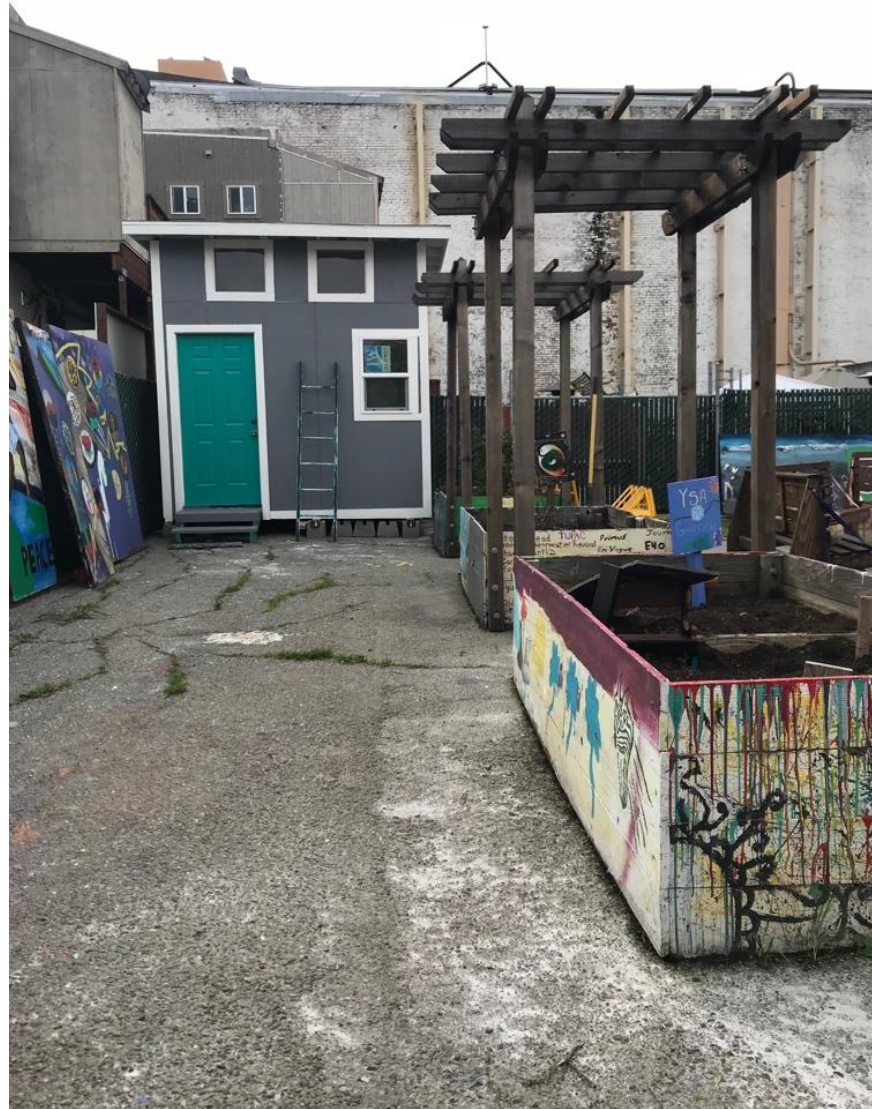
<http://www.berkeleyside.com/2017/11/17/berkeley-nonprofit-attempts-build-first-tiny-house-youth-village-u-s/>.



design a prototype with youth input. In October 2017, YSA had raised enough money to build the prototype and unveiled it with Berkeley city council members and the mayor in attendance.

The prototype, pictured below in Image 2, is 6 feet by 10 feet. At 60 square feet, the prototype is smaller than the parameters for tiny houses provided by the California HCD which sets the minimum at 80 square feet, but Sally Hindman says that the prototype was built to be narrower so that it can fit through the driveway's gate at YSA, where it is being stored. Future tiny houses built by the nonprofit are planned to be 8 feet by 10 feet. The prototype has a sleeping loft, insulation, and three windows. There is no plumbing, but the houses are not intended to be self-contained. The absence of amenities like bathrooms and showers within units means that these would be provided through communal facilities shared by residents in the village – a common element of the tiny house village model.

The house cost approximately \$20K to build, including the cost of designing the prototype. Future tiny houses built by YSA would rely on the same construction plans (the prototype cover sheet is pictured below in Figure 6) and rely on volunteer labor to bring down cost. Additionally, building the tiny houses is intended to be a job training opportunity for the youth served by the organization.



*Image 2. Youth Spirit Artworks Tiny House Prototype, Berkeley, CA. February 14, 2018.*

# YSA TINY HOUSE PROTOTYPE

Sheet List	
Sheet Name	Sheet Number
COVER/SHEET INDEX	A1.1
FLOOR PLAN	A2.1
REFLECTED CEILING PLAN	A2.2
FOUNDATION PLAN	A2.3
ELEVATIONS	A3.1
SECTIONS	A3.2
PANEL TYPES	A4.1
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CONNECTION & FRAMING DETAILS	A4.3
CORNER CONNECTIONS	A4.4



No.	Description	Date

Tiny House  
Prototype  
COVER/SHEET  
INDEX

Project number 001  
 Date 3/27/17  
 Drawn by  
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A1.1  
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*Figure 6. Youth Spirit Artworks Prototype Construction Set Cover Sheet.*

Source: Provided by Youth Spirit Artworks. March 27, 2017.

YSA has also identified and signed a letter of intent on a half-acre parcel for a tiny house village on the eastern side of what is currently Ohmega Salvage, a re-use and recycling architectural salvage space that is currently on both the western and eastern sides of San Pablo Avenue in West Berkeley. With Ohmega Salvage's business down "nearly 50% due to rising costs of operating an independent business and supporting staff in an expensive city,"<sup>57</sup> Sally Hindman shared in February 2018 during a site visit conducted for this report that they are willing to lease the space to YSA for a reduced amount per month. The location of the land is especially attractive for the project because there are almost no residential neighbors that would oppose the project due to fears that it would reduce their property value and San Pablo Avenue has busses which would provide essential public transportation for youth.

While YSA is still developing the program model for the village, they do know that the houses are not intended to be temporary. Youth have made it clear that they want to be there longer term, potentially between 2-5 years. An estimated 40% of youth would come from shelters, 40% would be youth who are in a perpetual state of couch-surfing (an arrangement where someone stays in a series of other people's homes typically with improvised sleeping arrangements) without a permanent home, and 20% would be youth receiving Social Security Income (SSI) in the amount of \$900 per month. YSA intends to charge rent – likely 1/3 of their income – and estimates that they would need approximately \$330 per month in rent per unit. For context, youth participating in YSA get paid a base of \$150 per month. A property manager and code of conduct would serve the village in modification of the self-governance model practiced at many tiny house villages.

### *Challenges*

YSA estimates that the full cost to launch the tiny house village will be between \$1.2-\$1.4M, and the organization has begun to line up funders and pro bono expertise to assist with the range of considerations involved with building a tiny house village, including legal questions, program model, design, and community outreach.<sup>58</sup> In an email correspondence for this report with YSA Executive Director Sally Hindman on April 16, 2018, Hindman shared that YSA has also worked with City of Berkeley staff, including the director of the Planning & Development Department, to discuss following outcomes related to zoning and fee waivers:

- Zoning for the tiny house project site will be classified as a "by right" as 25 sleeping cabins on wheels, at least for the first six months. YSA will simply need an over-the-counter Zoning Certificate and will not need to go to the Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB) for a Use Permit.

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<sup>57</sup> "Plans underway for 'tiny house village' in West Berkeley." Natalie Orenstein, Berkeleyside. April 16, 2018. Retrieved April 2018 from: <http://www.berkeleyside.com/2018/04/16/plans-underway-for-tiny-house-village-in-west-berkeley>.

<sup>58</sup> "Plans underway for 'tiny house village' in West Berkeley." Natalie Orenstein, Berkeleyside. April 16, 2018. Retrieved April 2018 from: <http://www.berkeleyside.com/2018/04/16/plans-underway-for-tiny-house-village-in-west-berkeley>.

- The City and YSA will be asking for guidance on creating language for a local City of Berkeley ordinance related to CA Assembly Bill 932<sup>59</sup> because the community needs specific language to apply the changes to Berkeley, which it has not yet adopted. YSA hopes that, although the intent of their project is to create permanent rather than temporary emergency shelter housing, the language adopted in this local ordinance can cover them after the first six months of operating the tiny house village.
- A proposal to the Berkeley City Council requesting waivers from all building, zoning, planning, inspection, and dumping fees. The proposal that was reviewed in draft form from March 27, 2018, requests additional waivers for parking, open space, and lot coverage requirements; allowing outdoor activities to 8pm; waiving City prevailing wage requirements to support the volunteer-driven and youth job-training project; allowing building permit submission as an accelerated plan check (BP-3A) turnaround; and finally, for the City to provide ongoing maintenance after completion of the project with recycling and solid waste management renewable annually by council vote. The Berkeley City Council plans to vote on a version of this proposal currently undergoing review and revision at an upcoming city council meeting.<sup>60</sup>

## Hayward

Hayward has 313 unsheltered and 84 sheltered homeless individuals according to the 2017 Alameda County Point-in-Time Survey, with up to 2-3 times more individuals likely experiencing homelessness than the official count. A joint study in October 2016 published by the California State University East Bay Department of Public Affairs and Administration and The Task Force to End Hunger and Homelessness in Hayward found that the average number of days their study that included 380 participants slept in a city area over a 30-day period was 25 days in an outdoor area; 21 days in an emergency shelter or transitional housing; 9 days in a hotel or motel; and 8 days with friends or relatives. Hayward has seen a large population increase (42% from 111,498 to 158,289 between 1990 and 2015), an increase in the median household income which has increased at a rate of 73.9% between 1990 to 2014, and a gradual increase in the poverty rate (in 1990 the poverty rate was 9.5% and grew to 14.5% by 2014).<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> California Assembly Bill 932, which authorizes until January 1, 2021 a declaration of a shelter crisis three cities in Alameda County (Berkeley, Emeryville, and Oakland) to additional cities in Alameda County. AB 932 eases the way to build tiny houses by allowing cities to bypass local building approval procedures or state housing, health, habitability, planning and zoning, or safety standards, procedures, and laws to build emergency bridge housing.

<sup>60</sup> "Support for Youth Spirit Artwork's Tiny House Village Project." Recommendation from City of Berkeley Council Member Ben Bartlett to City of Berkeley Mayor and City Council. Draft Dated March 27, 2018.

<sup>61</sup> "Facing up to Homelessness." A Joint Study by The Department of Public Affairs and Administration, California State University, East Bay and The Task Force to End Hunger and Homelessness in Hayward." October 2016. Retrieved April 2018 from: <https://hapaforhayward.files.wordpress.com/2017/06/hhcreportfinal.pdf>.

A tiny house community in a backyard, Hayward, CA

*Overview*

Tom Flemming, a Hayward resident who earns a living as a landlord managing 19 properties, wants to develop a tiny house community for homeless individuals on a nearly 14,250 square foot section of his property. His neighborhood is mainly comprised of renters who he anticipates will be receptive to the tiny house community in his backyard. In an interview at his property in Hayward conducted for this report on April 11, 2018, Flemming shared that there are multiple reasons for wanting to build the tiny house community: as a Christian, he feels compelled to provide a service, as he nears retirement he wants to leave a lasting legacy on the built environment, and he also sees the opportunity to build the development in a way that allows him to make a small profit.

Flemming intends to charge approximately \$600 in rent per unit. He would contract with Abode Services, an agency that secures permanent homes for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, who would potentially lease the homes from Flemming as well as provide a list of clients and case workers. Flemming hopes that having the community be professionally managed will help him avoid the process of having to personally evict tenants, which can be costly. For example, Flemming's last eviction took 4 months to resolve. The eviction cost him \$4,500 in legal fees, \$3K in relocation fees, and four months of rent.



*Image 3. Tom Flemming in his tiny house prototype. Hayward, CA. April 11, 2018.*

### *Challenges*

Initially Flemming planned to build 12 tiny houses, each no more than 180 square feet, behind his home along with communal facilities including a garden and dining area.<sup>62</sup> Flemming and his son Michael recently built a 135-square foot prototype that cost him \$19,616.95 to build not including labor costs (which he performed), on a chassis that has a kitchenette with a mini-fridge, fold-out bed, and composting toilet (there is no plumbing). However, because of the combined permit fees of \$40K-\$50K per structure, Flemming is now considering building 4-5 multi story town house units or a two story multi-unit dingbat-like apartment. Flemming

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<sup>62</sup> "Hayward man wants to build tiny houses community." Darin Moriki, East Bay Times. November 21, 2017. Retrieved April 2018 from: <https://www.eastbaytimes.com/2017/11/20/hayward-man-wants-to-build-tiny-homes-community/>.

envisions that up to 16 apartments would share a communal dining room, kitchen, laundry, an ADA compliant bathroom, counseling office, and a unit for an onsite resident manager. He also hopes to develop a way to simplify the construction process, preferring to have some or all elements made off-site.

## Unincorporated Alameda County

First Presbyterian Church, Castro Valley, CA

### *Overview*

A recent request for funding for a tiny house community for homeless individuals from a First Presbyterian Church in Castro Valley, put them on the radar of the Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) at the Alameda County Community Development Agency. The units would serve as temporary, transitional housing for 6-12 individuals. These modular units would then be hooked up to plumbing and electrical services and built with volunteer labor. (Tom Flemming of Hayward, profiled in the previous case study, designed the tiny house prototype that will be used at the church.) Case management and wrap around services would also be provided. \$127,900 in donations have already been committed to the project (28% of the full project costs). An additional \$60,000 in labor would be contributed by church volunteers.<sup>63</sup>

A staff report put together by the Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) at the Alameda County Community Development Agency recommends funding \$199,880 for the public facilities portion of the project for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). For context, HCD expects to award up to \$389,745 in CDBG in FY 18/19, the same amount that they awarded the previous year – although HUD has not yet notified HCD what amount the Alameda County Urban County will receive in FY 2018 CDBG funds.<sup>64</sup>

### *Challenges*

According to Michelle Starratt, Assistant Director of Housing and Community Development at the Alameda County Community Development Agency for this report on April 4, 2018, the Alameda County Planning department requires that if the houses are to be built on a permanent foundation, then all building construction requirements be met. This aligns with the State Housing and

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<sup>63</sup> “Staff Report: Recommendations for Funding Under FY2018 CDBG Jurisdictional Funds for Unincorporated Alameda County, March 13, 2018,” Alameda County Housing and Community Development Department Housing and Community Development Advisory Committee.

<sup>64</sup> “Staff Report: Recommendations for Funding Under FY2018 CDBG Jurisdictional Funds for Unincorporated Alameda County, March 13, 2018,” Alameda County Housing and Community Development Department Housing and Community Development Advisory Committee.



Community Development (HCD) requirements for tiny houses, including the requirement that each unit have a water sprinkler to satisfy fire codes, which would make the project cost prohibitive. Developer Tom Flemming discussed building the units with insulated panels that would be flame retardant as a workaround, but it is unknown whether the planning department will accept this as an alternative. If the homes are built on a chassis with wheels, then another set of issues comes from the need to designate the units as a six-unit mobile home park. Because there have been no new mobile home parks created in Alameda County for the past 70 years, some of the standards are out of date and pose additional logistical and design challenges for the tiny house community.

A possible strategy to overcome these challenges could emerge through the new emergency building standards that were recently adopted as appendices to the California Building Code and the California Residential Code. The new standards ease the way to build tiny houses for homeless individuals by providing cities and counties with consistent standards for emergency housing to adopt locally. The Alameda County Board of Supervisors recently declared a shelter crisis in Alameda County, the first step toward invoking these new standards. Alameda County should take the next step and adopt the new minimum standards into the local General Ordinance Code. To make the new standards work for this project, a re-zoning would also be required. The Alameda County General Ordinance Code currently allows for emergency shelters only in the R-4 multiple residence district, whereas the church property is zoned for C-1 (Retail Business) and R-S-D-20 (Suburban Residence, 2,000 square feet of building site area per dwelling unit) zone districts.

## Applications of the Tiny House Model

This section will discuss alternative housing that are frequently compared with tiny houses, all of which also tend to be smaller than standard housing: sanctioned and unsanctioned encampments, Accessory Dwelling Units, and micro-units. Characteristics and issues to consider for each housing type are raised.

### Asking the Right Questions about Tiny Houses

The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, an independent federal agency within the U.S. executive branch that leads the implementation of the federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness, acknowledges the growing popularity of the trend to use tiny houses but urges caution. A regional coordinator, Robert Pulster, posted the following questions on the agency’s website in September 2016 as a way for communities to assess the appropriateness of tiny houses for addressing homelessness:

*Table 5: United States Interagency Council on Homelessness Questions about Tiny houses*

Question	Answer
1. Will the tiny houses you are considering provide a home-like environment and meet housing quality standards?	Tiny houses should comply with local and federal building standards.
2. Do tiny houses provide a living environment that a potential resident would choose?	Alternative forms of housing should be available for homeless individuals who decline to live in a tiny house.
3. What role will tiny houses play within your systemic efforts to end homelessness?	The role of tiny houses along a continuum of support services should be defined along with measurable outcomes related to placement and stability.
4. Are tiny house developments the best use of financial and land resources?	The economics of tiny houses should be compared against affordable multi-units or supportive housing developments.
5. How will the tiny houses be appropriately integrated into the community?	Tiny house communities should be provided with appropriate services and integrated into the greater community.

Source: “Asking the Right Questions about Tiny Houses,” Retrieved on April 15, 2018 from <https://www.usich.gov/news/asking-the-right-questions-about-tiny-houses>

Of the five questions that the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness asks, question four, which asks “Are tiny house developments the best use of financial and land resources,” likely poses the most immediate challenge to the application of tiny house villages as a model that works in the Bay Area. The Alameda County case studies discussed earlier in this report indicate that, while they may not generally qualify as a highest and best use of the land, there is available land that can be reasonably used for this purpose by groups willing and able to take the initiative. Examples include: city-owned or city-leased land that is nearby or already the site of extensive homeless encampments; a nonprofit that would lease land from a business that is losing profitability on San Pablo Avenue in Berkeley; 14,250 square feet in a low-density neighborhood of Hayward that is primarily comprised of single story owner or renter occupied homes and two story dingbats; and the parking lot of a church for transitional housing for unsheltered neighbors.

Still, tiny houses may not always be the best way to maximize land and public investment. Below is a brief discussion of three alternatives that tend to be smaller than standard housing: sanctioned and unsanctioned encampments, Accessory Dwelling Units, and micro-units. Characteristics and issues to consider for each housing type are raised. Because the examples vary in the level of upfront capital, institutional support, and scale required, they should be seen as complementary to the tiny house village model.

### Safe Organized Spaces (SOS!)

Homeless encampments are becoming a ubiquitous fixture in the urban landscape of Alameda County, particularly in Oakland and Berkeley, but also in the Hayward area. An analysis of homeless encampments put together by Michael Drane, a Housing and Community Development Specialist at the Alameda County Community Development Agency’s Housing and Community Development Department (a December 2017 draft of which was reviewed for this report) showed:

- **Oakland:** a high population of unsheltered people along Interstates 880 and 980 and another concentration east of the Coliseum; West Oakland contains a concentration of census tracts with the most unsheltered residents overall and it has the densest population of unsheltered people by area within the county; there is another dense cluster west of Fruitvale Avenue between Interstates 880 and 580.
- **Berkeley:** there is a high overall population of unsheltered people around the Berkeley Marina and Interstate 580. The dense census tracts along Shattuck from downtown Berkeley to the south form the second densest grouping of unsheltered homeless people in the county, behind West Oakland.
- **Hayward Area:** high-population tracts are grouped around Mission Boulevard, Interstate 238, railroad lines running through Hayward, and San Lorenzo Creek. Downtown Hayward is a census tract with approximately 27-36 unsheltered people living in the tract, bordered by tracts with approximately 38-108 unsheltered people living in the tract. Of the census tracts with

approximately 38-108 unsheltered people, the census tract around the intersection of Mission Blvd. and Grove Way is the most densely populated in the Hayward Area. Its concentration is twice as high as the next densest tract in the Hayward Area.

Encampments fall into at least two categories: sanctioned and unsanctioned. Typically, members of unsanctioned encampments occupy the space illegally and experience frequent displacement by authorities, especially by Caltrans which owns many of the properties favored by encampments because these tend to be close to highways. Sanctioned encampments on the other hand will have some elements of the following in place: an organizing body made up of residents, neighbors, and advocacy/service representatives, a license agreement and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the property owner, insurance, trash collection and removal services, plan for sanitation needs, including water and energy. Sanctioned encampments can even have onsite programming, community agreements, and elements of a structure for self-governance.<sup>65</sup>

In November 2017, a planning group calling themselves Safe Organized Spaces (SOS!) convened to discuss the state of both sanctioned and unsanctioned encampments. According to the group, which is comprised of numerous individuals with experience working to address homelessness and some experts in tiny house villages, the term 'SOS!' was suggested for the following reasons:

We suggest this umbrella term. **SOS!** came to St Francis Homelessness Challenge as a term developed from a working group to generally describe the interim solution for those in a crisis on the streets.

Safe spaces can exist in unsanctioned and sanctioned environs - they share enough characteristics within the diversity of their iterations. The line between unsanctioned and sanctioned is one that can harm the people who get divided within this construct. We want to create spaces for either of "permitted" and "non-permitted" land opportunities. The unpermitted strategy works toward triage, and suggests the need for a

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<sup>65</sup> "Safe Organized Spaces Select Planning Group." Unpublished document. November 2017. Retrieved April 2018 from: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1t14O8Pg-2YI9bTS4Gelj-Zmsg1nOz11Dtf92QusPuSc/edit>.

specific toolkit, and also for permitted sites that obtain agreements to increase the site's stability - these are sanctuary camps.<sup>66</sup>

As described above in the SOS! framework, when there is limited budget, services ranging from hygiene to case management can be provided to existing encampments to help stabilize them. Many of these encampments are intended to be temporary and transitional, but there are also examples of encampments that last for multiple years and even decades across the U.S., as described in Andrew Heben's book Tent City Urbanism. Encampments that follow the SOS! framework may be a pragmatic way to temporarily address the current housing shortage, especially for homeless individuals who choose to decline tiny houses or other shelter alternatives. But encampments cannot be said to meet the standard of providing a home-like environment that meets housing quality standards.

### Micro-Apartments

Micro-apartments are frequently discussed as a higher and better use of land than free standing tiny houses, and interest in building these for homeless individuals seems to be increasing. Potter's Lane in Orange County, which opened in March 2017 for homeless veterans, is the first housing complex in California to be made from shipping containers.<sup>67</sup> Factory OS is a new firm that, as soon as it becomes operational, will build modular homes offsite in their factory on Mare Island off of Vallejo. Factory OS has a contract with the City of Oakland to build 110 studio apartments for formerly homeless people in West Oakland.<sup>68</sup> Additional developers have proposed projects as well: Innovation Place in Santa Clara would house 200 homeless individuals in 160-240 square feet made from metal shipping containers.<sup>69</sup> Panoramic Interests, a firm that developed a prototype called the MicroPAD for homeless individuals, encouraged the City of Berkeley to vote to ease the way for micro apartments to house homeless individuals in February 2017.<sup>70</sup>

While micro-apartments achieve economies of scale in a way that tiny houses may not, they frequently require significantly more upfront capital than free standing single story units. For example, American Family Housing, the nonprofit that developed Potter's

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<sup>66</sup> "Safe Organized Spaces Select Planning Group." Unpublished document. November 2017. Retrieved April 2018 from: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1t14O8Pg-2YI9bTS4GelJ-Zmsg1nOzI1Dtf92QusPuSc/edit>.

<sup>67</sup> "How these shipping containers converted to housing have affected homeless veterans." Theresa Walker, Orange County Register. April 10, 2017. Retrieved April 2018 from: <http://www.ocregister.com/2017/04/04/how-these-shipping-containers-converted-to-housing-have-affected-homeless-veterans/>.

<sup>68</sup> "The modular revolution promises to shake up Bay Area housing." San Francisco Business Times. February 16, 2018. Retrieved April 2018 from: <https://factoryos.com/press/modular-revolution-promises-shake-bay-area-housing/>.

<sup>69</sup> "Residents Criticize Sobrato 'Innovation Place' Homeless Housing Project. David Alexander, The Santa Clara Weekly. 2017. Retrieved April 2018 from: <https://www.santaclaraweekly.com/2017/Issue-6/residents-criticize-sobrato-innovation-place-homeless-housing-project.html>.

<sup>70</sup> "Berkeley moves forward on building micro-units for the homeless." Tracey Taylor, Berkeleyside. February 16, 2017. Retrieved April 2018 from: <http://www.berkeleyside.com/2017/02/16/berkeley-moves-forward-on-building-micro-units-for-the-homeless>.

Lane in Orange County, has \$4.3 million in revenue and \$26.2 million in liabilities based on information obtained from Guidestar.<sup>71</sup> Factory OS's first order is to build 300 modular homes for Google employees.<sup>72</sup> John Sobrato, the developer of Innovation Place in Santa Clara, is the multi-billionaire founder and chairman of Sobrato Development Company with his own Forbes profile.<sup>73</sup> Patrick Kennedy, owner of Panoramic Interests, has completed 15 mixed-use infill projects in Berkeley and San Francisco since 1990 which includes more than 689 new units of housing and 100,000 square feet of commercial space.<sup>74</sup> Groups that are interested in building tiny houses for their unsheltered neighborhoods are not necessarily similarly equipped to build multi-story micro-apartments.

### Accessory Dwelling Units

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are dwelling units that are either attached or detached from a primary dwelling, usually a single-family residential property, and auxiliary to its use. In general, ADUs present a unique opportunity for individual homeowners to create more housing and can increase the supply of housing in areas where there are fewer opportunities for large scale developments, particularly in neighborhoods that are predominately zoned for and occupied by single-family homes. ADUs are also relatively inexpensive to construct compared with standard size homes. An April 2017 report jointly published by UC Berkeley's Center for Community Innovation and the Turner Center found that survey respondents in three Pacific Northwest cities – Portland, Seattle, and Vancouver – reported spending an average cost of \$156,000 on construction per ADU.<sup>75</sup> In California, the adoption of state legislation in 2016 and 2017 has made the process of building ADUs easier and more efficient.

Los Angeles County is piloting a program that would incentivize home owners to build ADUs to house homeless families in their backyards. In August 2017, the LA Board of Supervisors approved a \$550,000 pilot program, and in February 2018, Bloomberg Philanthropies awarded Los Angeles a \$100,000 Mayor's Challenge grant to study its feasibility. Rents would be covered by Section 8 housing vouchers with tenants contributing 30% of their incomes. Under the pilot, homeowners would be lent \$75,000 to build an

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<sup>71</sup> "Guidestar Report Generated for: American Family Housing." Guidestar. Report generated on April 22, 2018. Retrieved April 2018 from: <https://www.guidestar.org/ViewPdf.aspx?PdfSource=0&ein=33-0071782>.

<sup>72</sup> "Google will buy modular homes to address housing crunch." Laura Kusisto, Wall Street Journal. June 15, 2017. Retrieved April 2018 from: <https://hollidaydevelopment.com/media/google-will-buy-modular-homes-address-housing-crunch/>.

<sup>73</sup> "Forbes Profile: John A. Sobrato & family." Forbes. April 22, 2018. Retrieved April 2018 from: <https://www.forbes.com/profile/john-a-sobrato/>.

<sup>74</sup> "About Panoramic Interests." Retrieved April 2018 from: <https://www.panoramic.com/about/>.

<sup>75</sup> "ADU Update: Early Lessons and Impacts of California's State and Local Policy Changes." David Garcia, Turner Center. December 2017. Retrieved April 2018 from: [http://turnercenter.berkeley.edu/uploads/ADU\\_Update\\_Brief\\_December\\_2017\\_.pdf](http://turnercenter.berkeley.edu/uploads/ADU_Update_Brief_December_2017_.pdf).

ADU or \$50,000 for a renovation for up to six units. The loan principal will be reduced each year the unit is occupied by a formerly homeless person and forgiven after 10 years, at which point homeowners could choose to end their participation in the program.<sup>76</sup>

Multnomah County in Oregon, which includes Portland, was the first county to pilot incentivizing homeowners to build ADUs for homeless individuals, but it is unknown where the County is at in their progress. The Los Angeles Times reports that they have run into tax, liability and regulatory issues.<sup>77</sup> Outside of these pilot projects, known issues with using ADUs for low income housing can be with ‘tiny landlords’ who understand their responsibilities to tenants as opposed to traditional affordable housing developments built with public financing and terms of affordability (e.g. 55 years). While housing choice vouchers have helped to shift affordable housing options to include private rental market, problems with the private rental market have been widely documented, including in Matthew Desmond’s 2016 book Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City about Milwaukee.

### How are Tiny Houses Different than Mobile Homes?

Some of the recent literature suggests that a key difference between tiny houses and mobile homes is one of perception. For example, there is a cultural stigma against mobile homes (“half the American Dream,” according to one study<sup>78</sup>), while tiny houses are considered chic by people who are simply downsizing from larger homes or by millennials looking for an affordable way to break into the housing market. Because of the different demographics that mobile homes versus tiny houses appeal to, there is anxiety in some mobile home parks with both housing types that tiny houses could push out longstanding residents.<sup>79</sup>

Mobile homes tend to be pursued by households who are looking for affordable ‘ownership’ housing and are not typically geared for homeless households. (However, it is also important to note that mobile homes in traditional mobile home parks are a hybrid form of homeownership and rental housing because typically the resident owns the mobile home unit but rents the space in the mobile home park.) As of 2010, most buyers of manufactured homes had an average wealth of \$59,000 compared with \$102,000 for all

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<sup>76</sup> “L.A. County wants to help build guest houses in backyards – for homeless people.” Gale Holland, Los Angeles Times. April 11, 2018. Retrieved April 2018 from: <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-homeless-tiny-house-20180411-story.html>.

<sup>77</sup> “L.A. County wants to help build guest houses in backyards – for homeless people.” Gale Holland, Los Angeles Times. April 11, 2018. Retrieved April 2018 from: <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-homeless-tiny-house-20180411-story.html>.

<sup>78</sup> “Study Finds U.S. Manufactured-Home Owners Face ‘Quasi-Homelessness.’” Paola Scommegna, October 18, 2004. Retrieved April 2018 from: <http://www.prb.org/Publications/Articles/2004/StudyFindsUSManufacturedHomeOwnersFaceQuasiHomelessness.aspx>.

<sup>79</sup> “Trailer Park Nation: Should Tiny Houses Replace Mobile Homes?” Sanjena Sathian, Ozy.com. May 8, 2015. Retrieved April 2018 from: <http://www.ozy.com/immodest-proposal/trailer-park-nation-should-tiny-houses-replace-mobile-homes/40240>.

homeowners.<sup>80</sup> The size of mobile homes may be more appealing to this segment – a standard single wide mobile home is 1,620 sf and a standard double wide mobile home is 1,800 sf. At more than four times the size of a tiny house, households who are looking for affordable housing and want to partake in the American Dream of home ownership might prefer a mobile home to a tiny house.

Rising housing costs and land value could make mobile home parks increasingly challenging to sustain in the Bay Area, particularly where they are in close proximity to jobs in the technology industry. Earlier this year in Palo Alto, for example, the Santa Clara Housing Authority stepped in and bought a 117-unit mobile home park called the Buena Vista Mobile Home Park for \$40.4 million in May of 2017. The owners had wanted to sell the 4.5-acre land for high-end development. (Monthly space rents were about \$1,000 each compared with area median rent for a rental housing unit of \$5,500 a month and area median home value of \$2.5 million at that time according to reporting for SF Gate based on research on the real estate site Zillow.com.)<sup>81</sup> Alameda County’s average rent and home prices are not as high as in Palo Alto, but have increased exponentially over the last ten years.

The issue in Palo Alto is related to a broader issue of ownership in mobile home parks. According to a paper published in the Housing Policy Debate journal in 2010, ownership of mobile home parks by agencies or land trusts is an exception. A majority of mobile homeowners are leasing their land under a short-term lease and landowners wield a high level of power. Mobile home owners are vulnerable to rapid repossession if owners fall behind on payments or face eviction if the terms of the lot lease are violated.<sup>82</sup>

Unincorporated Alameda County has an ordinance designed to stabilize annual space rent increases in mobile home parks for existing residents. On April 11, 2017, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors adopted an updated Mobile Home Space Rent Stabilization Ordinance that limits annual rent increases for spaces in mobile home parks to 5% and requires park owners to apply for an additional rent increase, but also allows for an unrestricted increase when a space turns over (‘vacancy decontrol’) although the space is then again subject to the annual rent increase maximum from the new basis.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Richard Genz (2001) Why advocates need to rethink manufactured housing, Housing Policy Debate, 12:2, 393-414, DOI: 10.1080/10511482.2001.9521411. Retrieved April 2018 from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2001.9521411>.

<sup>81</sup> “Deal saves Palo Alto mobile home park residents from eviction.” Kevin Fagan, SFGate. May 19, 2017. Retrieved April 2018 from: <http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Deal-saves-Palo-Alto-mobile-home-park-residents-11159708.php>.

<sup>82</sup> Richard Genz (2001) Why advocates need to rethink manufactured housing, Housing Policy Debate, 12:2, 393-414, DOI: 10.1080/10511482.2001.9521411. Retrieved April 2018 from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2001.9521411>.

<sup>83</sup> “Alameda County Mobile Home Space Rent Stabilization Ordinance.” Alameda County Community Development Agency. March 7, 2017. Retrieved April 2018 from: <https://www.acgov.org/cda/hcd/documents/StaffReportandExhibits.pdf>.



Because of their smaller standard size and low densities, mobile home parks present a similar problem as single story tiny house villages in terms of viability for all jurisdictions in Alameda County. A staff report prepared for a March 2017 Alameda County Board of Supervisors meeting on the Mobile Home Space Rent Stabilization Ordinance provides information on the number of mobile home parks and total number of spaces in Unincorporated Alameda County and each city in the County that has a mobile home park.

*Table 6. Alameda County Jurisdictions with Mobile Home Parks Compared with Median Value Per Square Foot of Homes*

Alameda County Jurisdiction	Median Value Per Square Foot All Homes (as of February 2018) <sup>84</sup>	# Mobile Home Parks	# Spaces	Smallest Park (# Spaces)	Largest Park (# Spaces)	Average Size (# Spaces)
Unincorporated	N/A	19	622	8	86	33
Hayward	\$472	10	2,131	37	462	213
San Leandro	\$484	8	827	30	366	105
Livermore	\$490	7	443	14	159	63
Pleasanton	\$585	4	404	14	208	101
Fremont	\$688	3	732	165	331	244
Oakland	\$578	3	49	10	26	16
Union City	\$523	2	896	352	544	448

Source: “Mobile Home Space Rent Stabilization Ordinance – March 21 2017 Board of Supervisors Staff Report with Exhibits,” Retrieved April 15, 2018 from <https://www.acgov.org/cda/hcd/documents/StaffReportandExhibits.pdf>

Alameda County has 56 total mobile home parks comprising 6,104 total spaces, with the highest number of mobile home parks in the Unincorporated County (19 parks comprising 622 spaces). Hayward has the second highest number of mobile home parks at 10 parks and the highest number of spaces in the County at 2,131 spaces. The three cities with the highest number of mobile home parks (Hayward with 10, San Leandro with 8, and Livermore with 7) also have the lowest median value per square foot of home values. (Median value per square foot of homes in the Unincorporated County was not readily available using Zillow data). Cities not included in Table 6 that have the highest median value per square foot of home values (Piedmont at \$975 per square foot, and Berkeley and Albany at \$854 per square foot) do not currently have mobile home parks and would likely not be good candidates for adding parks. Construction costs would be more expensive, and homeowners tend to be more protective of property values in high cost areas.

<sup>84</sup> “Median value per square foot of all homes,” Zillow Research, downloaded on April 15, 2018 from <https://www.zillow.com/research/data/>.

## Recommendations

Tiny houses do not represent a silver bullet solution to address the homeless crisis in California. But at a time when there is reduced funding for large scale affordable developments and a surging interest in tiny houses as a model to address homelessness, cities, nonprofits, private citizens, and faith-based groups that are prepared to take the initiative should be supported in their efforts by Alameda County. Below is a preliminary list of specific changes to local zoning, design, and permitting processes that would make it more efficient to build tiny houses for homeless individuals. These recommendations are drawn from case studies on efforts in Alameda County described earlier in the report.

### What specific changes to local zoning, design, and permitting processes would make it more efficient to build tiny houses for homeless individuals in Alameda County?

- The Alameda County Board of Supervisors recently declared a shelter crisis in Alameda County. Alameda County should take the next step and adopt the new emergency housing minimum standards that were added as an appendix to the 2016 California Building Code and 2016 California Residential Code that significantly reduce the barriers to building tiny houses for homeless people.
- California State Housing and Community Development (HCD) should consider developing and adopting building code standards that are unique to tiny houses rather than applying existing building standards to tiny houses.
- Emergency housing should be permitted in more zoning districts. In Alameda County, the General Ordinance Code currently allows for emergency housing only in the R-4 multiple residence district.
- Additional parcels that can be zoned as mobile home parks should be identified.
- Permit fees should be waived for groups that want to build tiny house villages, including: building, zoning, planning, inspection, and dumping fees. Costs associated with these fees can make a project with a relatively small budget cost prohibitive or are unduly disproportionate to the total budget. Parking, open space, and lot coverage requirements should be waived as well because many of these requirements do not apply to the scale of tiny house village developments.
- A manual showing best practices for tiny house implementation, including evaluation metrics, staffing, construction, and design, should be developed and implemented to make the process of building tiny houses more efficient.

### What are some additional considerations that Alameda County might want to explore around implementation?

- For temporary and transitional villages like the city-owned and nonprofit managed Outdoor Navigation Center in Oakland, can a higher standard for design and service provision be met while maintaining a similar project budget?

- How can nonprofits that want to develop a tiny house village as a new service offering ensure that they address internal resource capacity issues that might be stretched by the project, including planning for additional staff, budget, and fundraising time needed to manage the additional work associated with expanding?
- For privately-owned tiny house villages like the village proposed in the backyard of a landlord in Hayward, can development costs be trimmed down, and rent affordability and case management services be adequately provided to residents, while still providing a financial incentive for the landlord?
- What are the appropriate metrics for tiny house villages that serve homeless individuals to evaluate success?
- What materials can be developed to explain the tiny house for homeless village model to address issues and concerns?

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Full Survey Results: Survey of Tiny House Communities that Serve Homeless Households

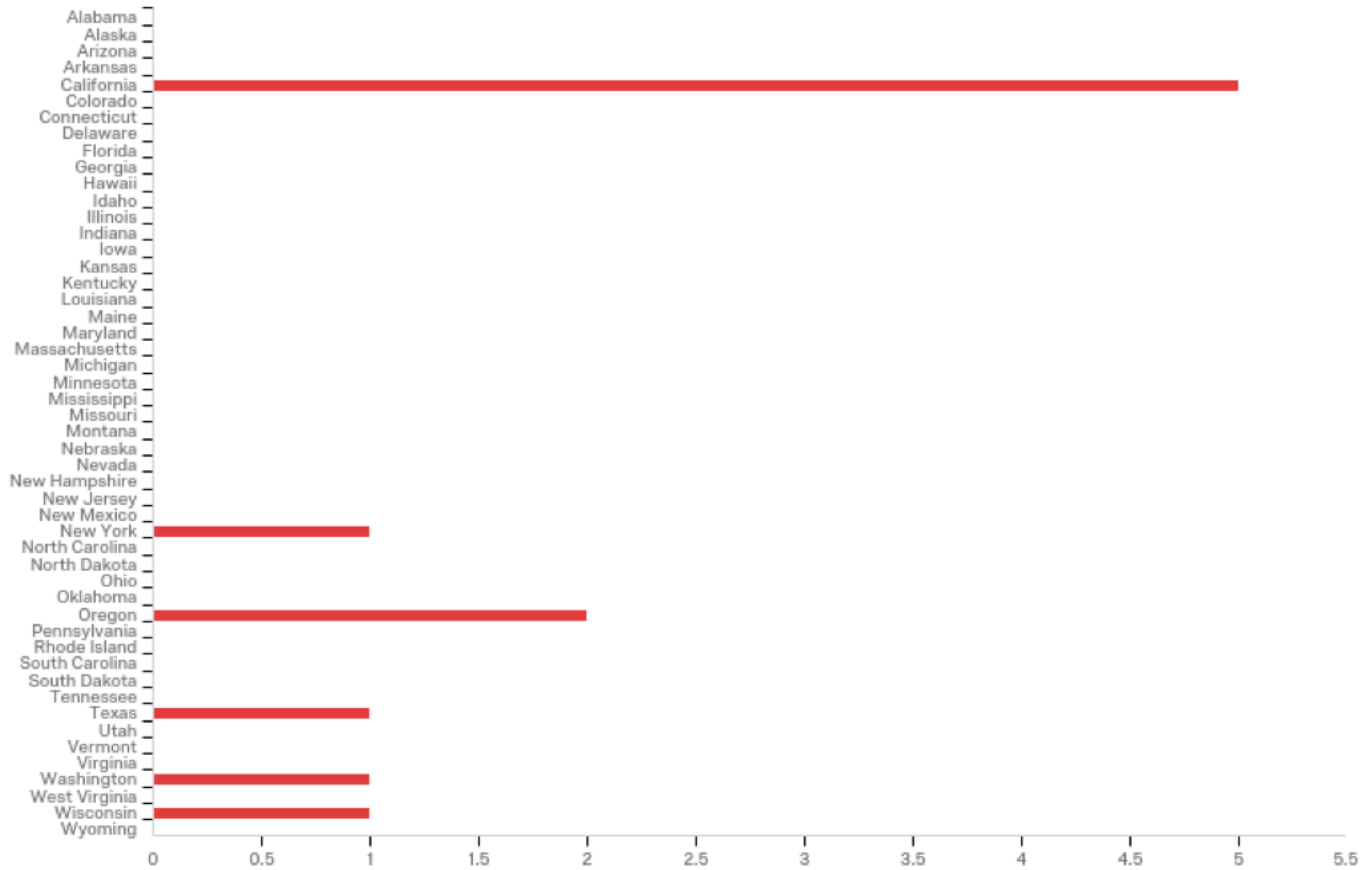
#### Q 1- What is the name of your tiny home community?

What is the name of your tiny house community?
2 Wind Cottages
14 Forward
Community First Village
Compassion Village
Dignity Village
Low Income Housing Institute's Tiny House Program
OM Village
Opportunity Village
Potter's Lane
River Haven
The Villages

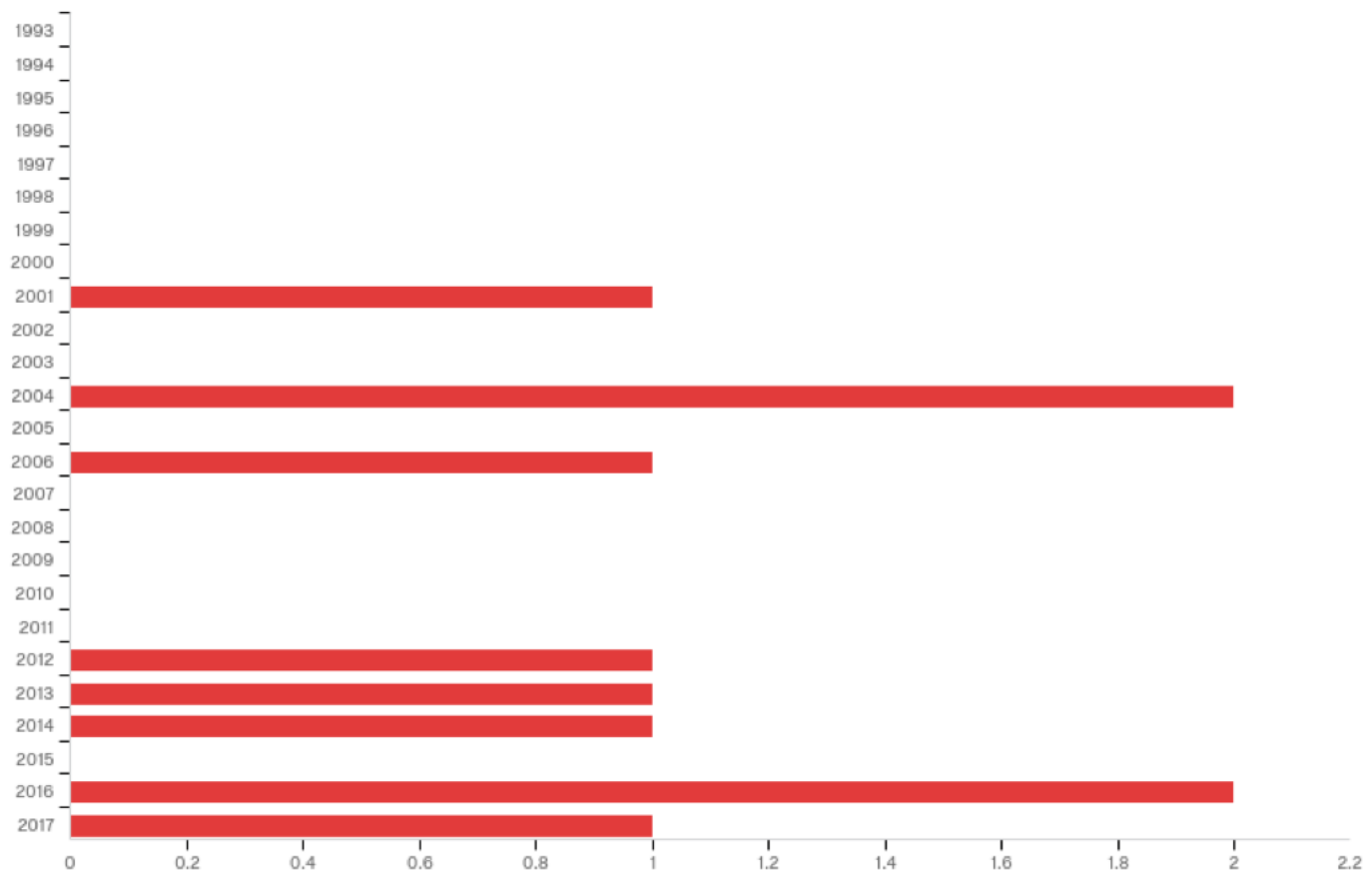
Q 2- In what city is your tiny home community located?

City and state
Eugene, OR
Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) outside Austin, TX
Fresno, CA
Madison, WI
Marysville, CA
Midway City, CA
Newfield, NY
Portland, OR
Sacramento, CA
Seattle, WA
Ventura, CA

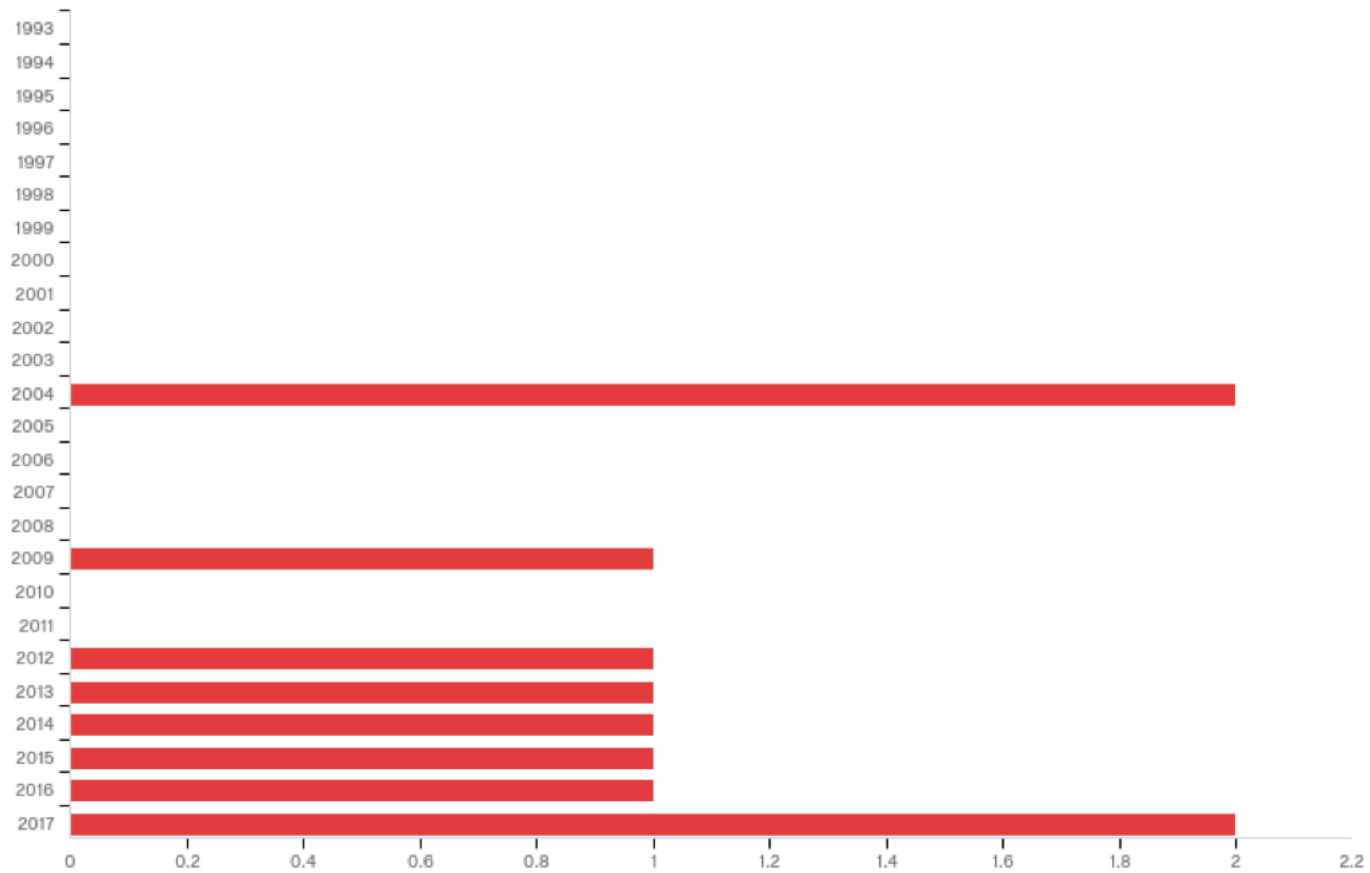
### Q 3-In what state is your tiny home community located?



Q 4-What year did planning for your tiny home community start?



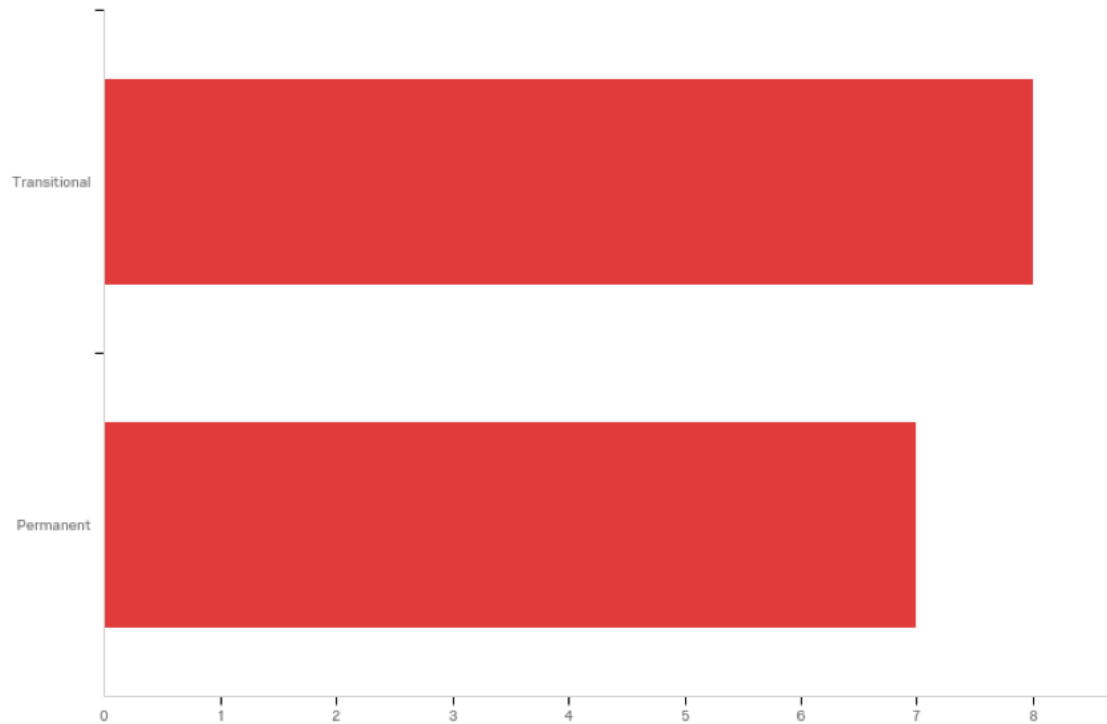
Q 5-What year was the first tiny home built in your community?



## Q 6-Do you provide transitional or permanent housing? You may select more than one option below.

For the purpose of this study, we are defining these housing types as:

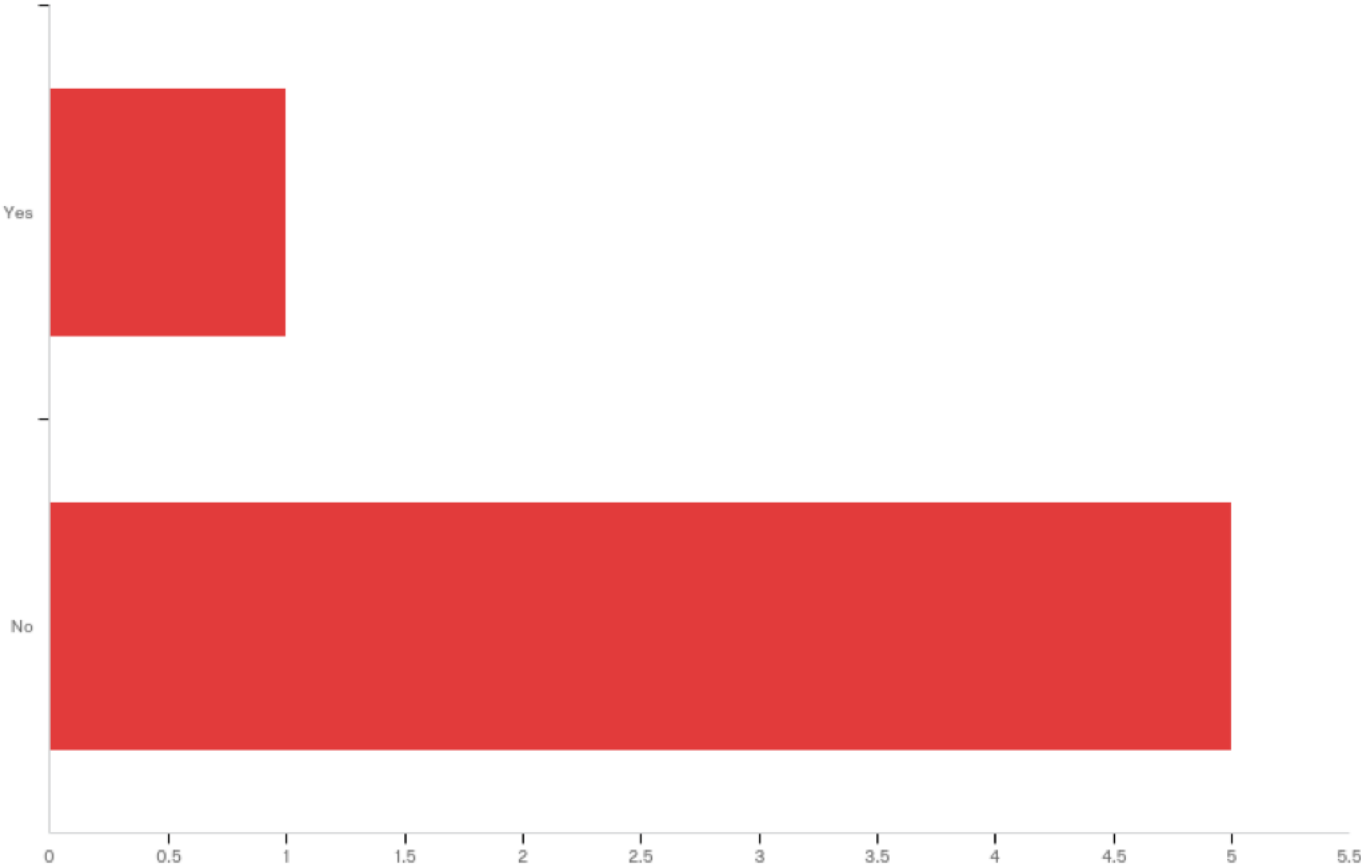
- Transitional housing: housing offered with support services for a defined period of time to facilitate movement to independent living.
- Permanent housing: housing offered with support services with no time limit.



Q 7-If you selected transitional housing in the previous question, please enter the maximum stay allowable for tenants here. You may enter a range of days.

Maximum Stay
No limit
No limit
84 days
2 years
2 years
2 years (officially– in practice, that isn't strictly enforced)

Q8- If you selected permanent housing in the previous question, do you have a rent-to-own model in place?

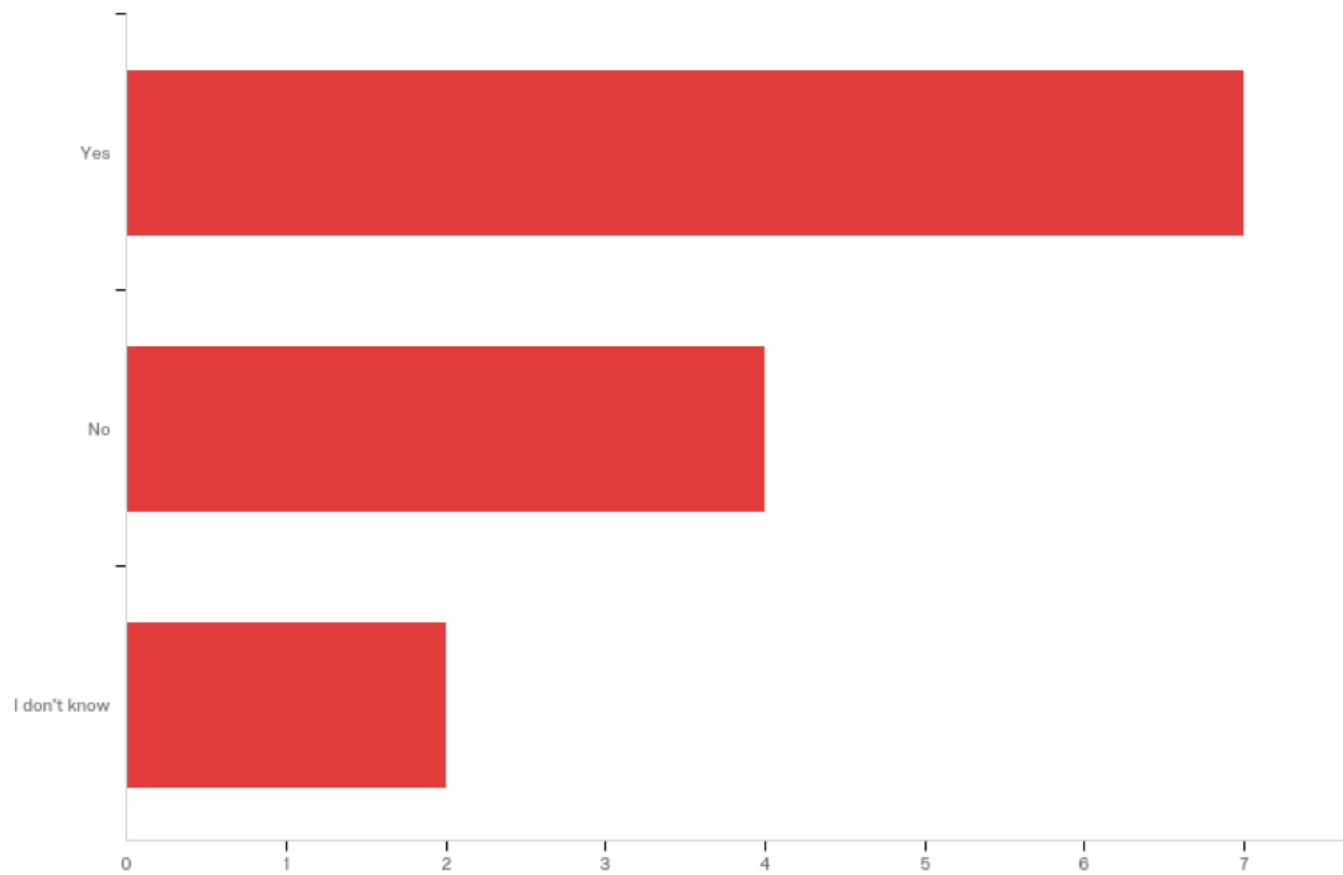




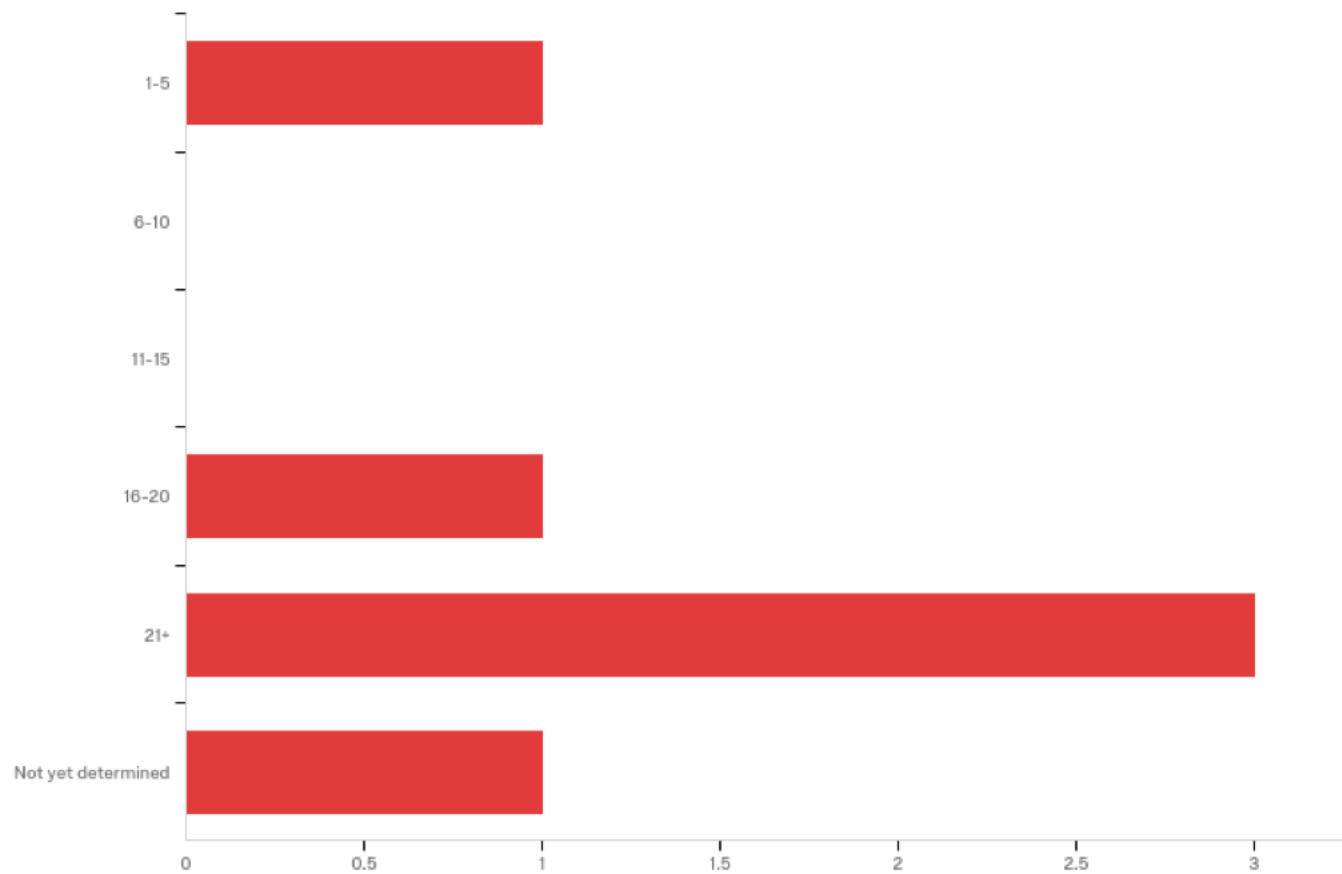
Q9 - How many housing units does your tiny home community have? Please enter as a number. For the purposes of this study, we are defining housing units as a house, an apartment, a group of rooms, or a single room occupied or intended for occupancy as separate living quarters.

Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
5.00	240.00	57.20	72.54	5262.16	10

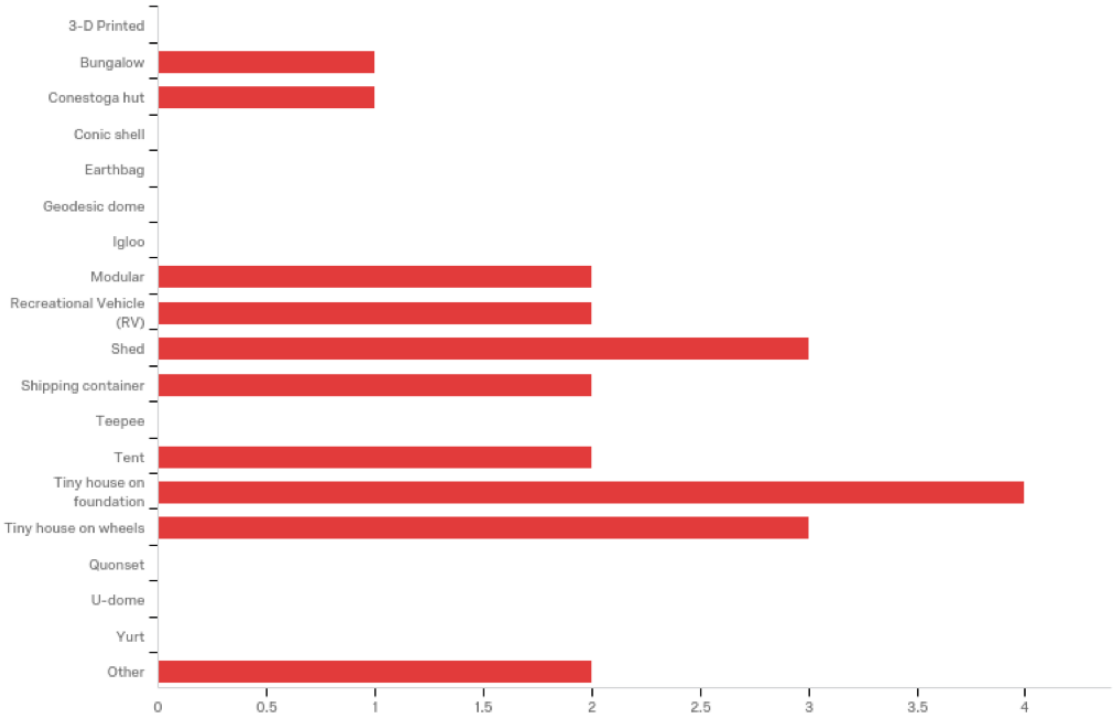
Q10 - Are you planning to add more housing units to your tiny home community in the future?



Q11 - If you answered yes to the previous question, how many housing units are you planning to add to your tiny home community?

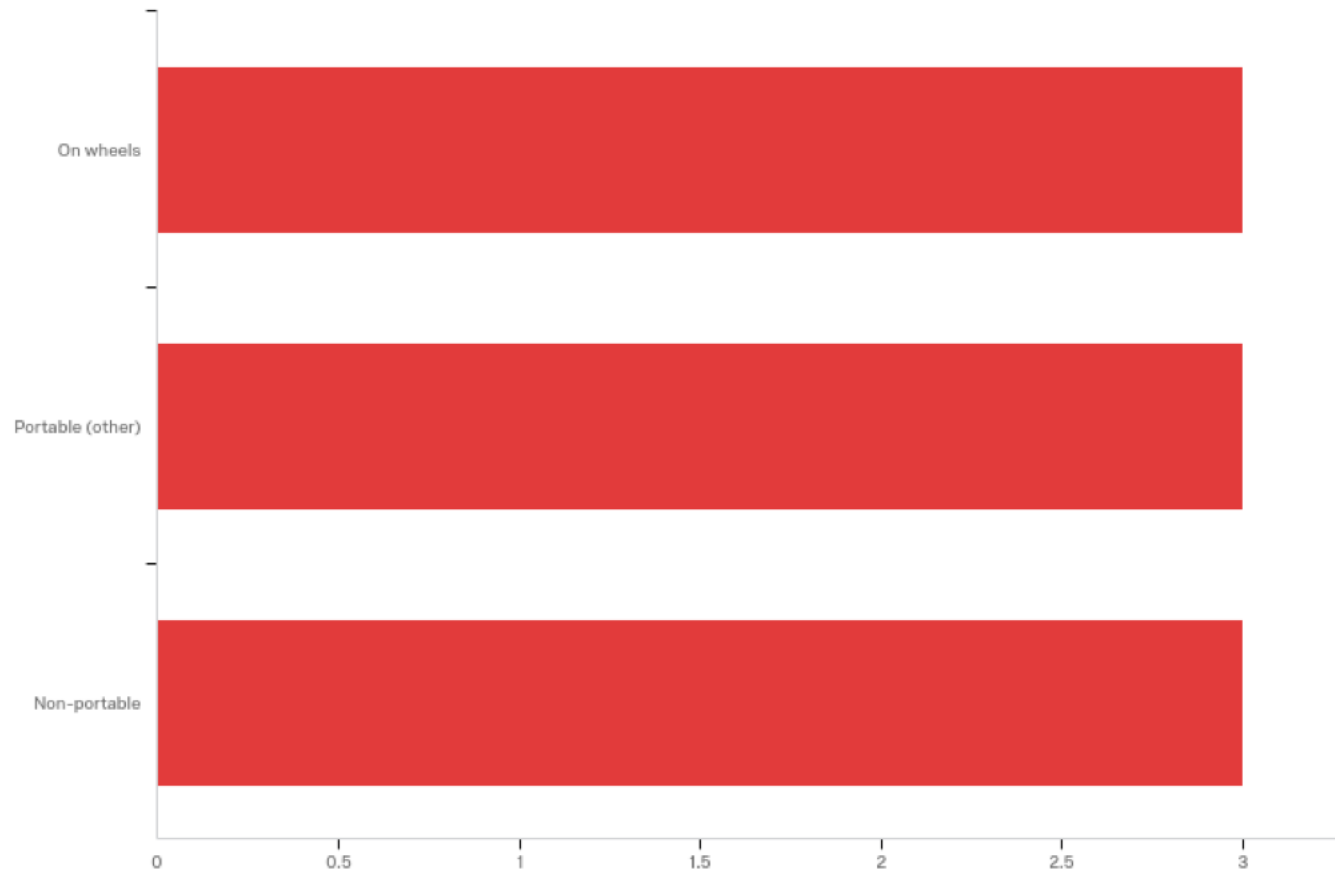


Q12 - What types of tiny homes are in your community? Please select all that apply.

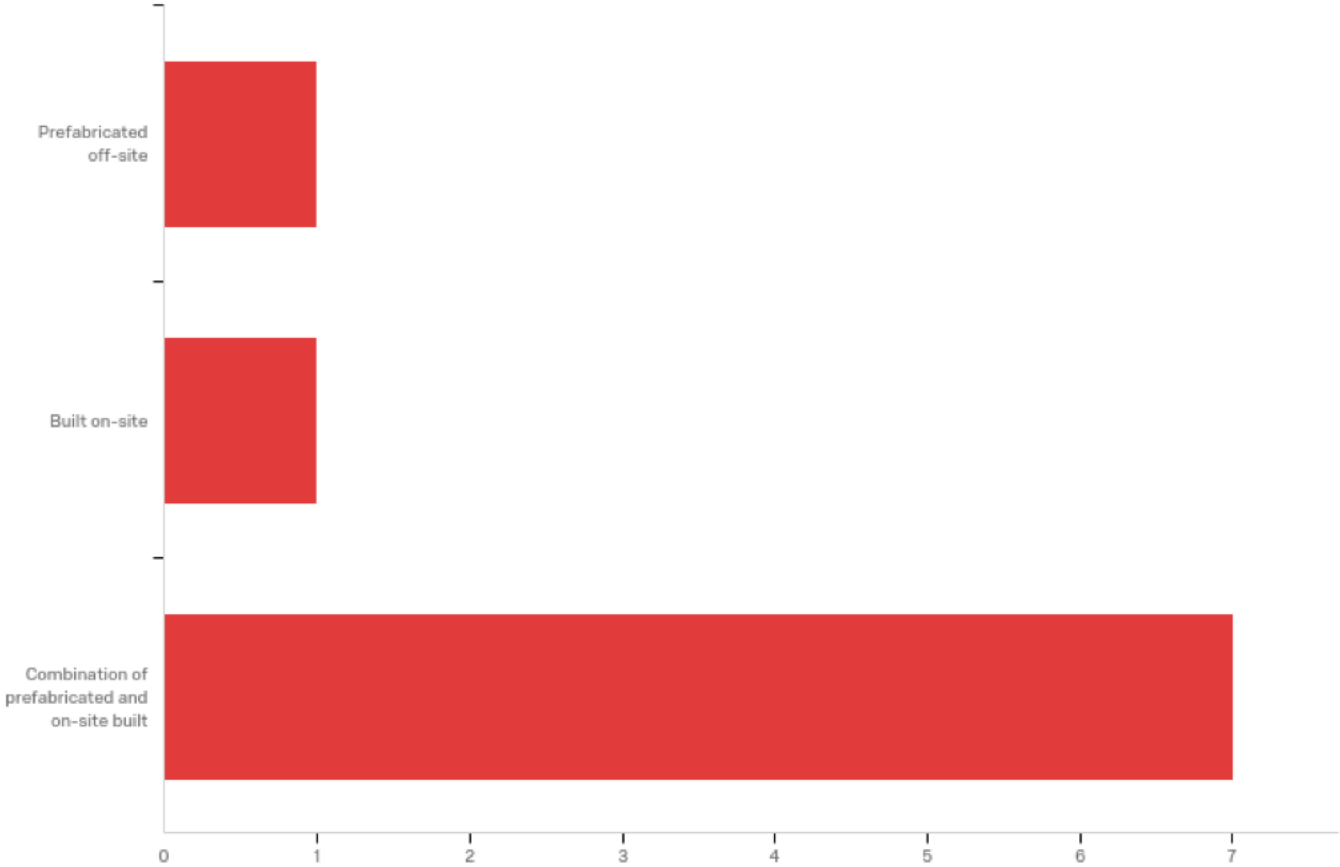


Other
Park model home/tiny house on skids
Permanent micro homes

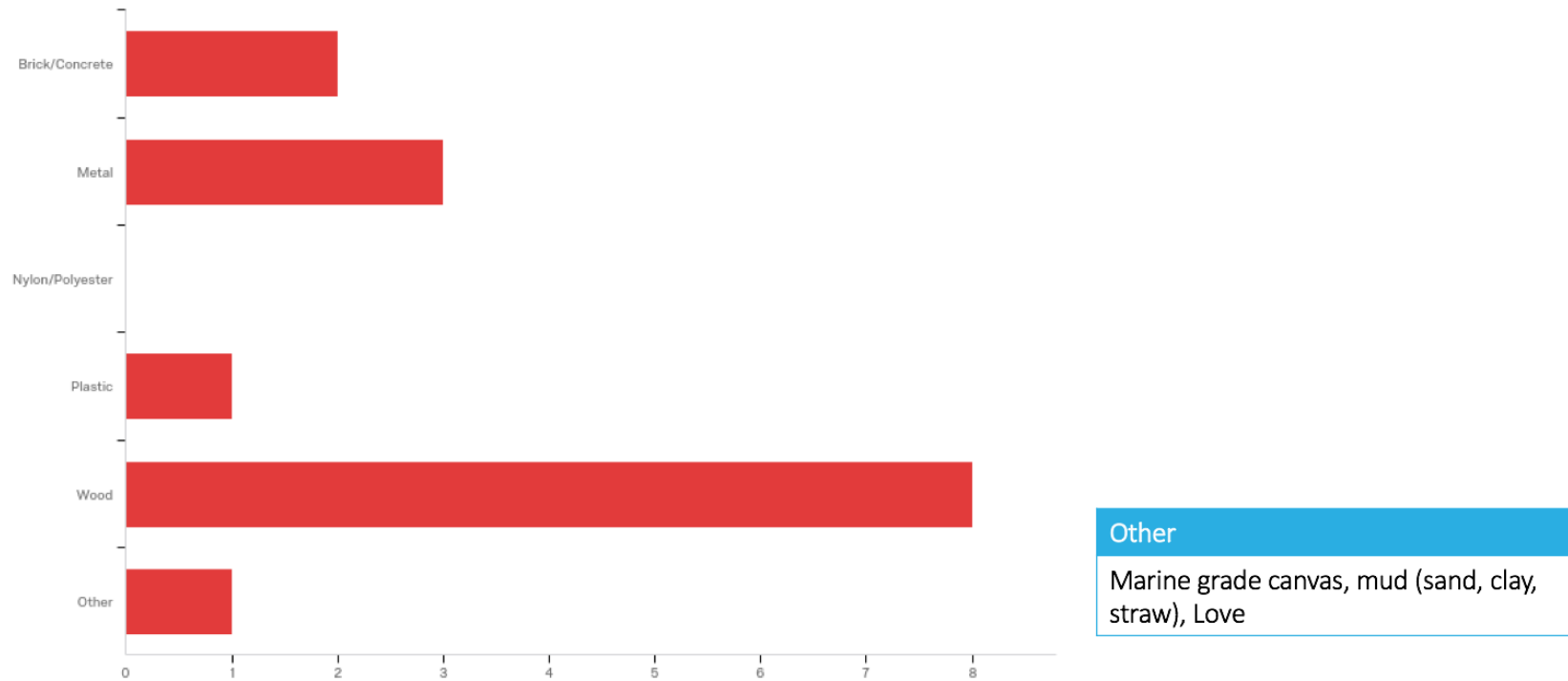
### Q13 - Can the housing units move?



# Q14 - How were the housing units built?



Q15 - Out of what materials were the housing units built? Please select all that apply.



Q16 - How many square feet are in each tiny home? Please enter the square footage as a number. You may enter a range of numbers. Please leave blank any category that is not applicable.

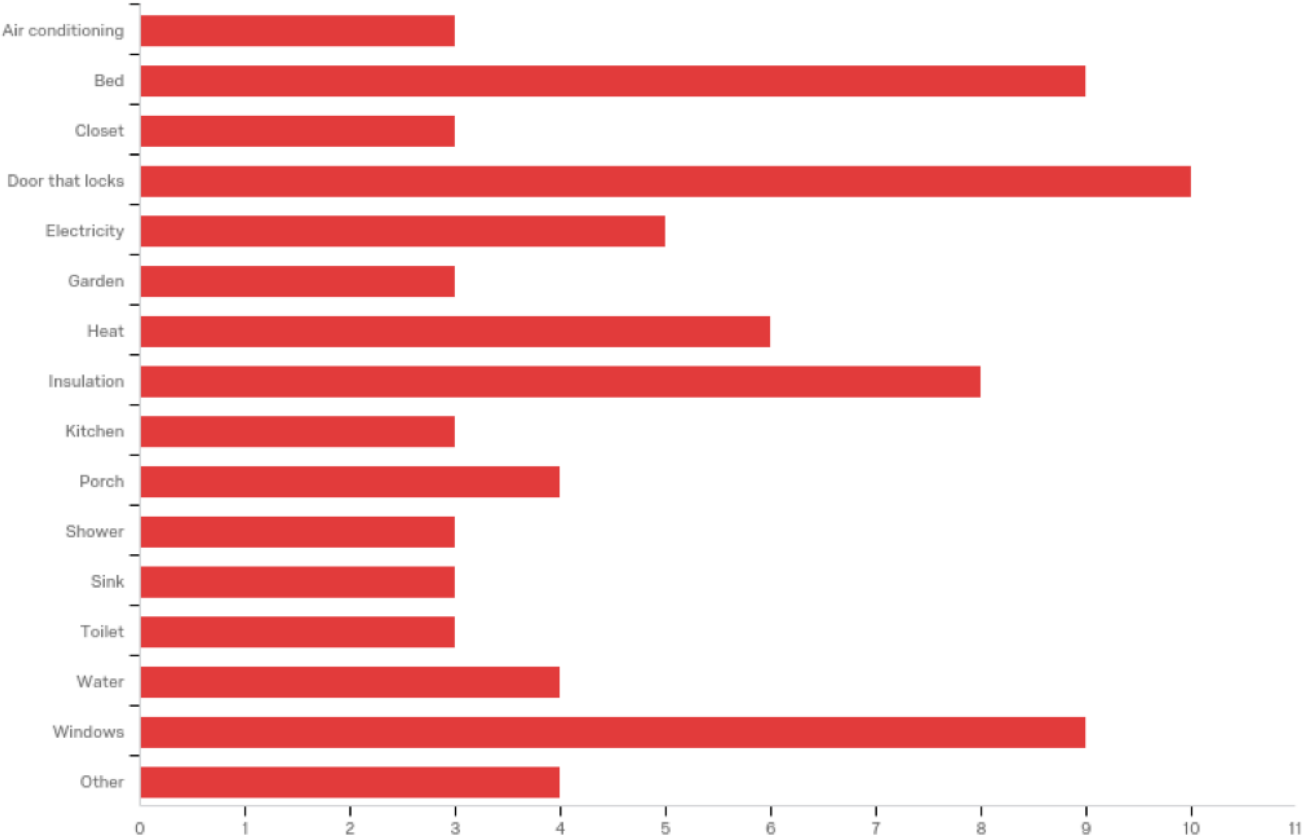
Analysis Units = SF	Single Family Adults N=10	ADA Accessible N=2	Couples N=5	Families N=2
Minimum	64.00	120.00	80.00	96.00
Maximum	480.00	400.00	300.00	350.00
Mean	161.40	260.00	139.20	223.00
Standard Deviation	120.41	197.99	91.01	179.61
Variance	14,500.60	39,200.00	8,283.20	32,258.00

Q17 - How many acres of land is the tiny home community on? Please enter the acreage as a number.

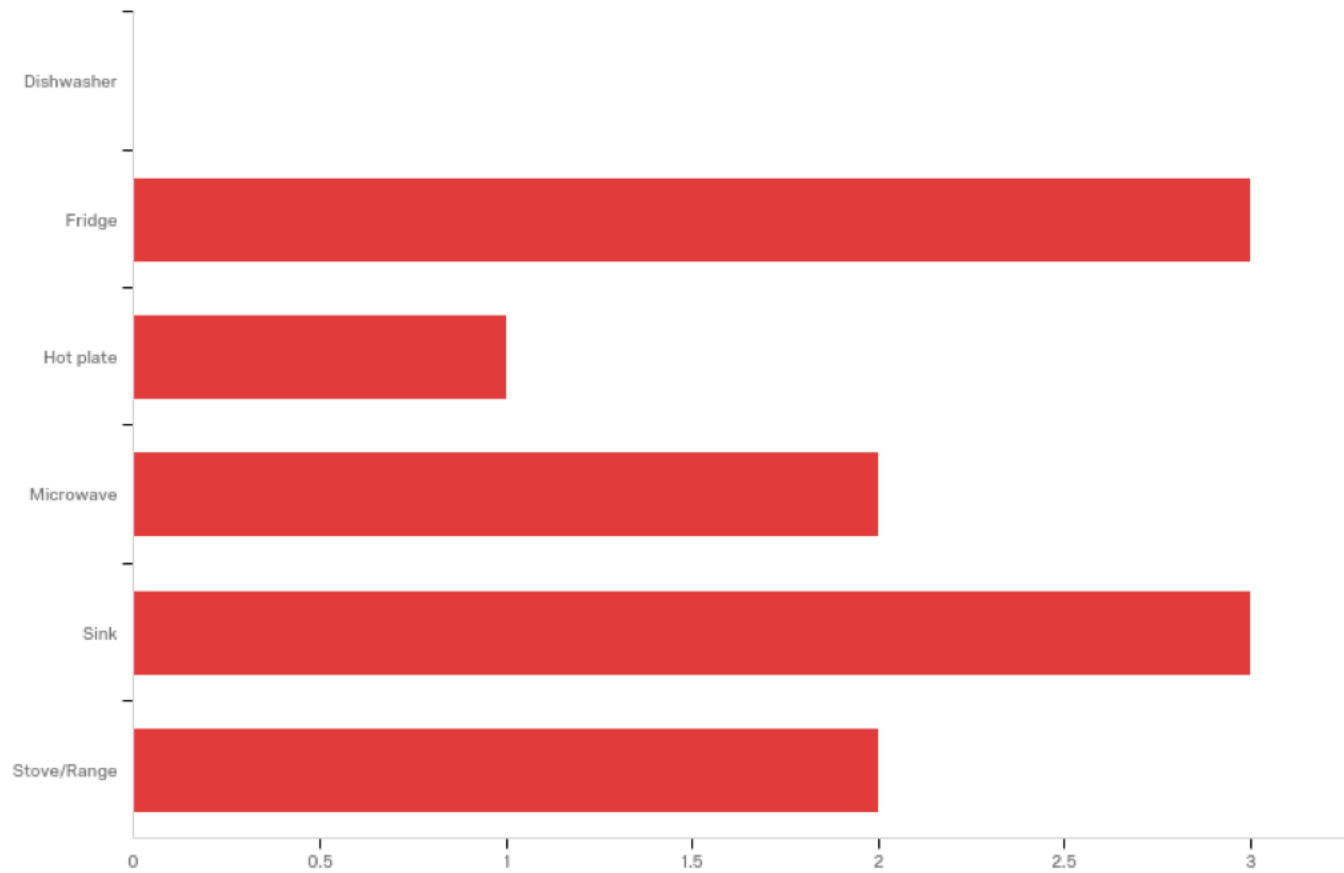
Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
0.38	27.00	4.16	8.64	74.57	8



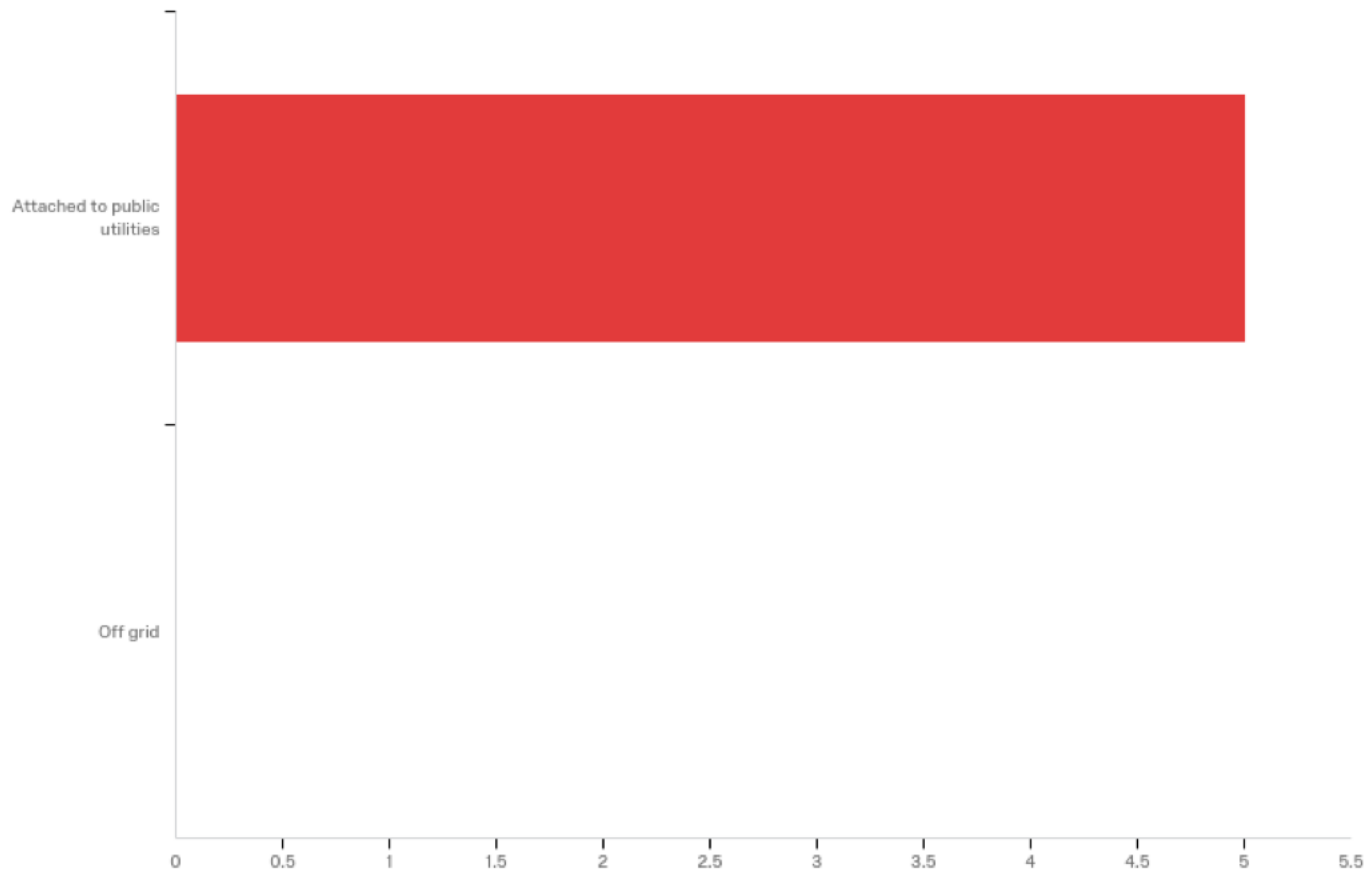
Q18 - What individual amenities do the housing units have? Please select all that apply.



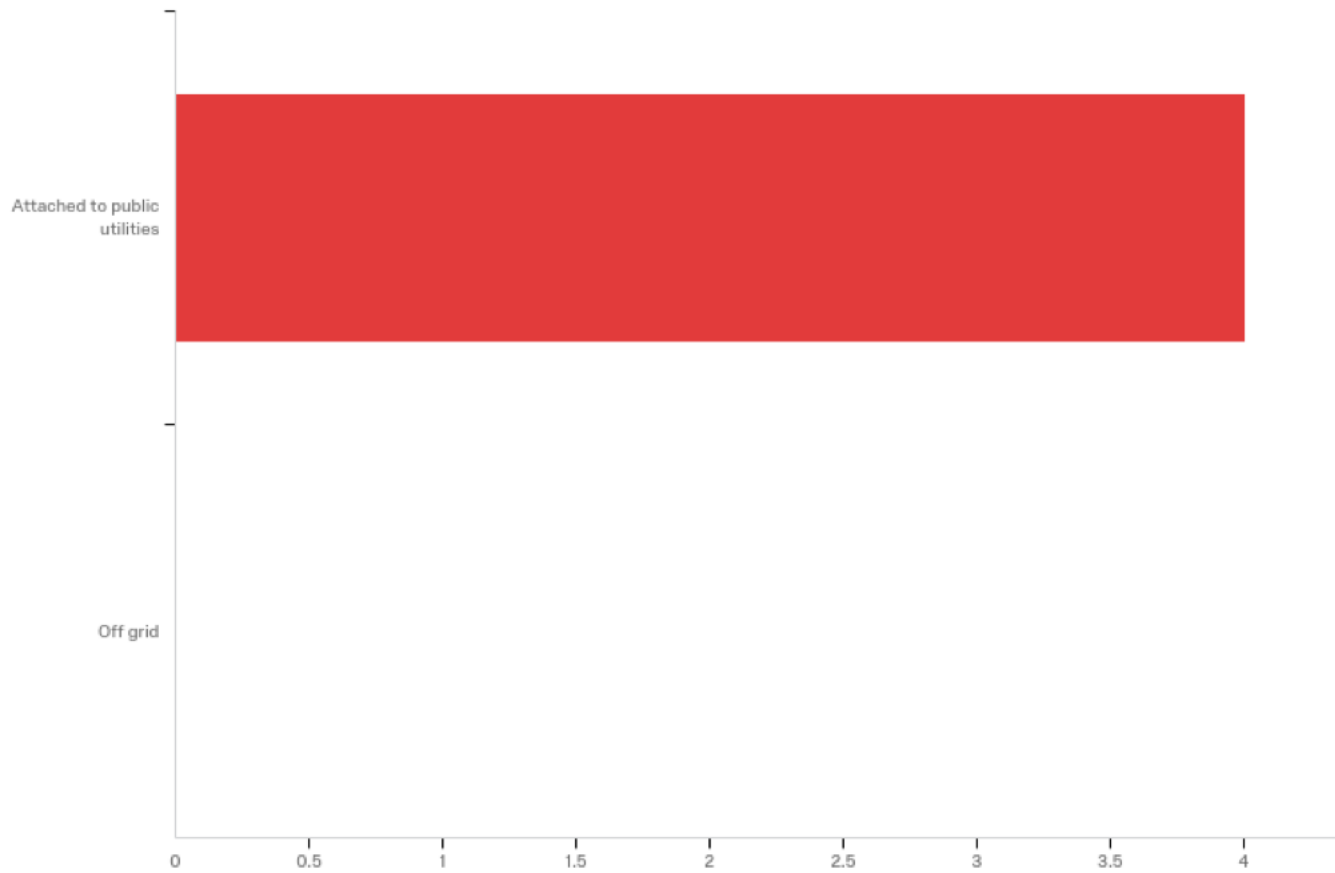
Q19 - If you selected "kitchen" in the previous question, please select the amenities that kitchens have here. Please select all that apply.



Q20 - If you selected "electricity" in the previous question, please specify if the electricity is attached to public utilities or off grid here.



Q21 - If you selected "water" in the previous question, please specify if the water is attached to public utilities or off grid here.



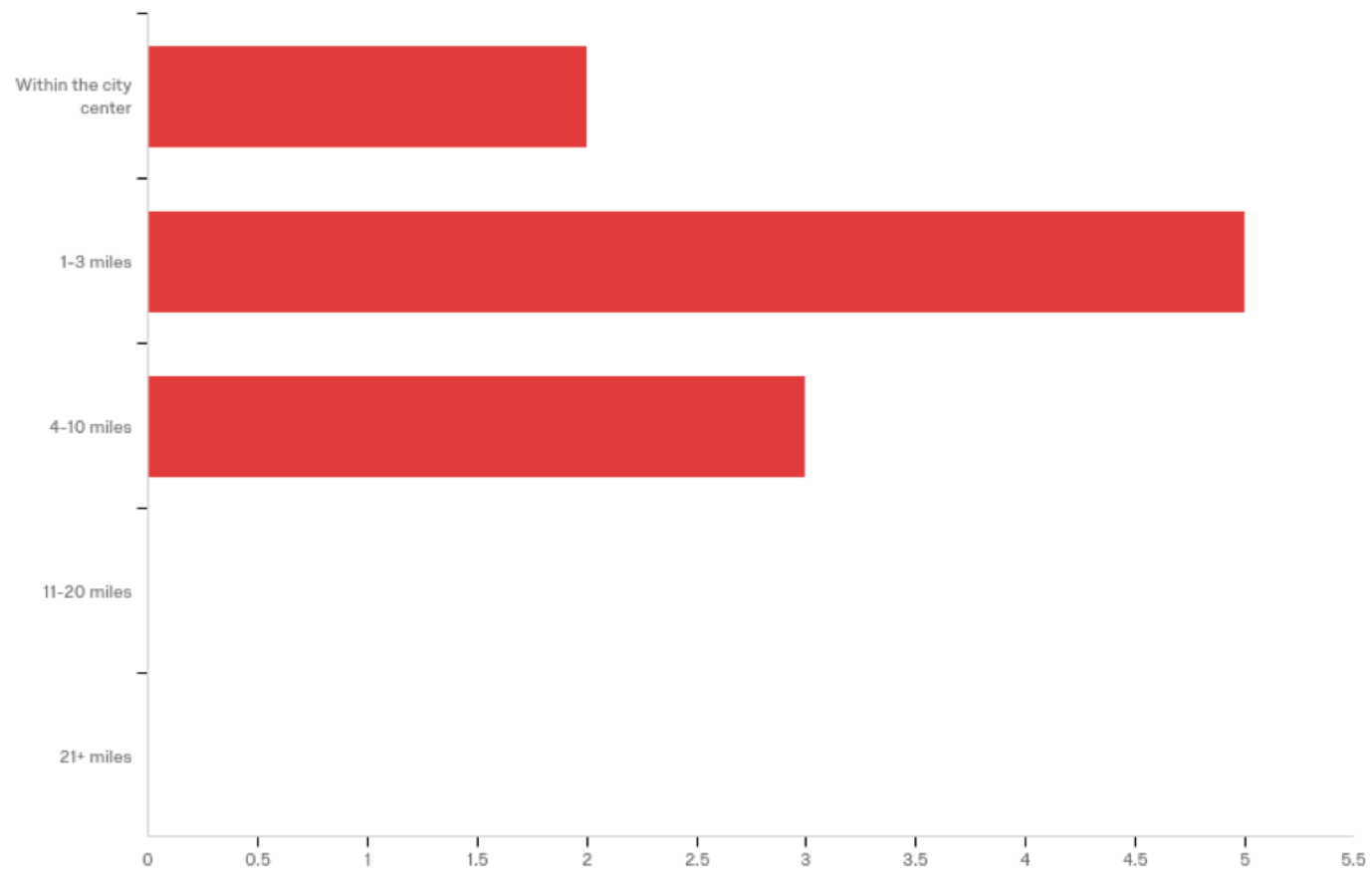
Q22 - Does your community offer shared amenities? Please select all that apply.



Q23 - If you selected transportation access as an amenity in the previous question, how close is your community in proximity to public transportation, e.g. within 1/2 mile? Please enter proximity in all or portion of miles.

Mileage
Bus comes into the community
1/8
Within 1/4
1/4
Within 1/2
1/2

Q24 - Approximately how far away from the city center is your tiny home community?



Q25 - Approximately how many residents live in the community? Please enter as a number below.

Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
4.00	300.00	69.40	89.69	8043.84	10



## Q26 - How are residents selected or approved?

### How are residents selected or approved?

Through the coordinated entry process. At this time they have to be actively engaged in finding permanent housing.

Basis of their needs. Homeless and men just getting released from jail. Drug abuse and mental illness.

Combination of waiting list, referral from not for profit partners, and referral from designated city agencies working with Seattle police department and other municipal departments.

Those wishing to participate (we don't have "residents") may apply and are then assessed to see if they would be best served by 14Forward or another service in the community.

8 chronically homeless veterans receiving VASH vouchers were screened and selected by the VA. 7 non VASH chronically homeless veterans were identified by the COC's Coordinated Entry systems. The 16th resident is a paid on site manager who is an AFH employee and is not a veteran.

There is a 500 hour "sweat equity" work requirement that serves to help community members and board members gauge whether or not they would be a good fit. We have a community agreement that they must sign, the general membership, the Board, and the other Village members all have a voice. We attempt consensus.

first through a coordinated assessment (qualifying under HUD's definition of chronically homeless). Residents then come for a tour and then fill out application to live onsite. 20% of our community is slated as Missional. The Mission Community are not necessarily formerly homeless residents of the Village. They are people called to live at the Community First Village and come a wide cross section of Austin's awesomest people.

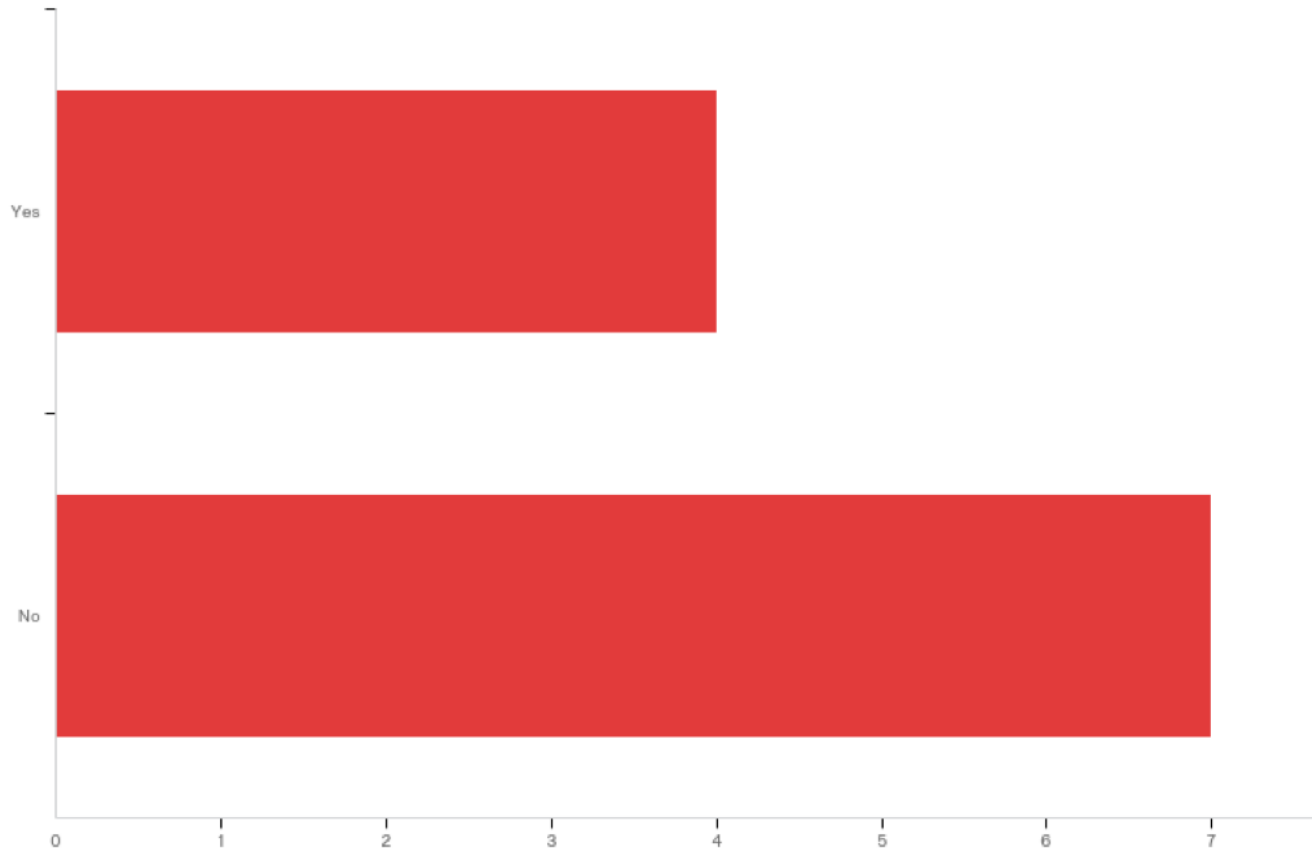
Village Intake Committee-- comprised of 4-5 Village residents who meet with each potential new Villager. Anyone wanting to live at Dignity Village must first meet with this committee in person to get on the waitlist, then call to check in each week. They have a discussion about expectations for living at Dignity Village and some information about the individual, but there's not really anything that disqualifies a person from moving in, as long as they complete the process of calling in, etc.

Vetting is done by referring agencies, pastors and community members and referred to us. We then interview, further vet, confirm living in a community will work for their needs and make final decisions on entrance.

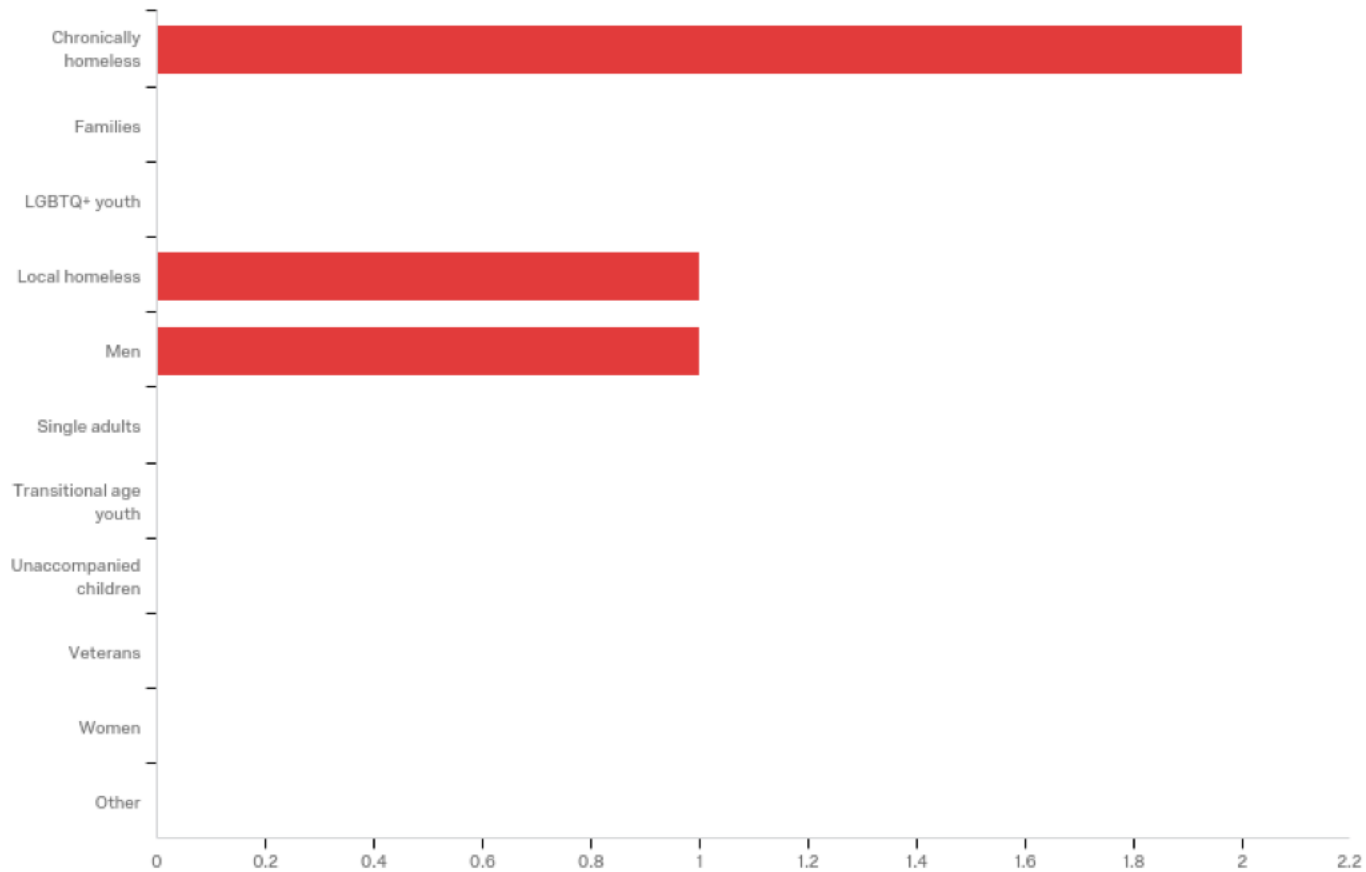
Q27 - What is your best guess of the percentage breakdown of residents by age at any given time?  
(Please enter the number as a percent. The total must sum to 100.)

Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
Under 18	0.00	100.00	14.63	32.69	1068.36	16
18 - 24	0.00	25.00	5.25	7.57	57.31	16
25 - 59	0.00	100.00	49.06	38.21	1460.06	16
60+	0.00	40.00	10.80	12.57	158.03	15
Unknown	0.00	100.00	20.94	38.41	1475.68	16

Q28 - Does your community have a target population that it primarily serves?



Q29 - If you answered yes that your community has a target population that it primarily serves, please select the target population(s) that you serve below. Please select all that apply.



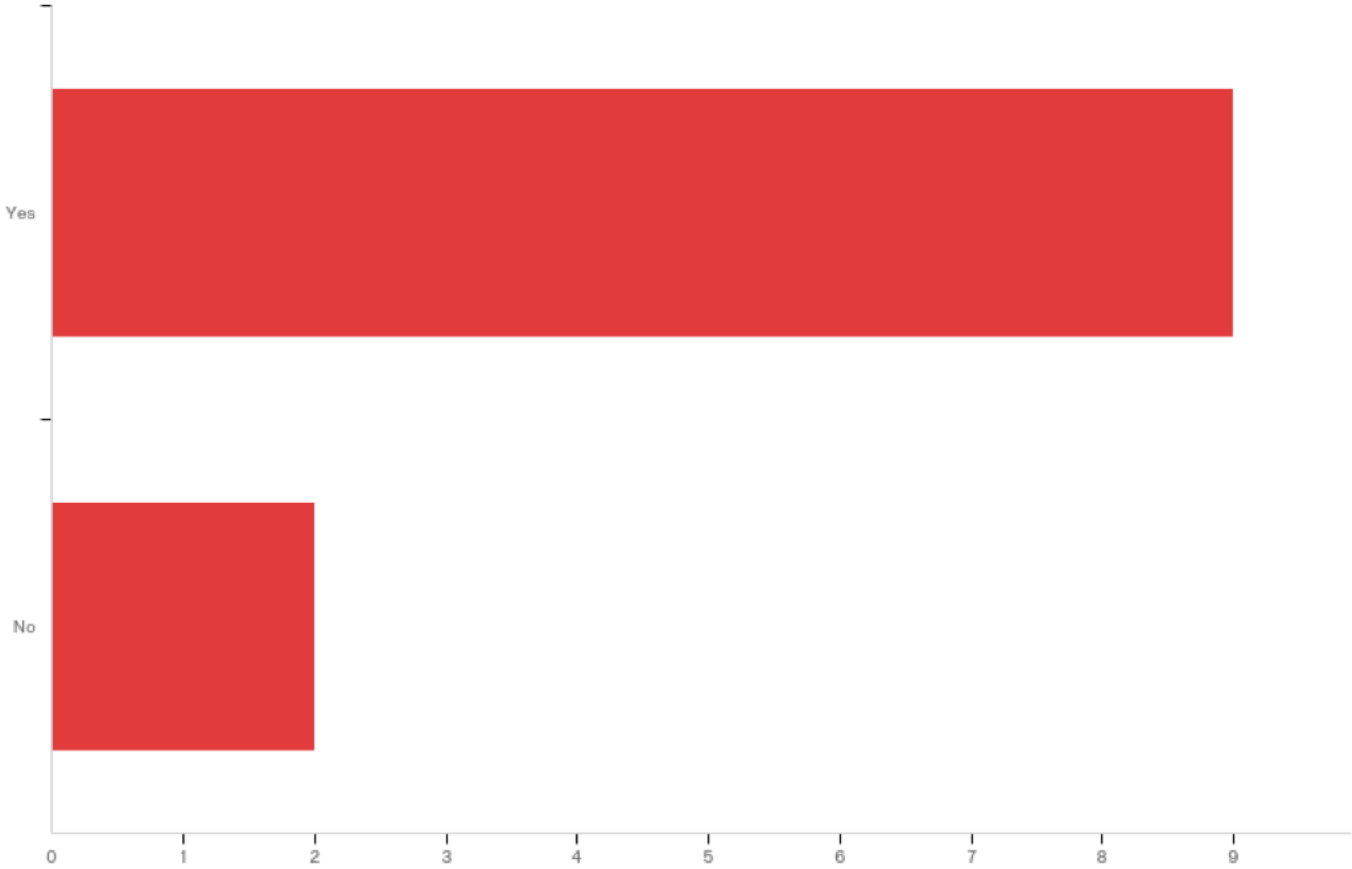
Q30 - If you answered yes that your community has a target population that it primarily serves, what is your best guess of the percentage breakdown of residents by sex at any given time? (Please enter the number as a percent. The total must sum to 100.)

Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
Men	0.00	100.00	30.63	35.57	1265.23	8
Women	0.00	50.00	14.25	19.14	366.44	8
Other	0.00	30.00	3.88	9.88	97.61	8
Unknown	0.00	100.00	51.25	48.85	2385.94	8

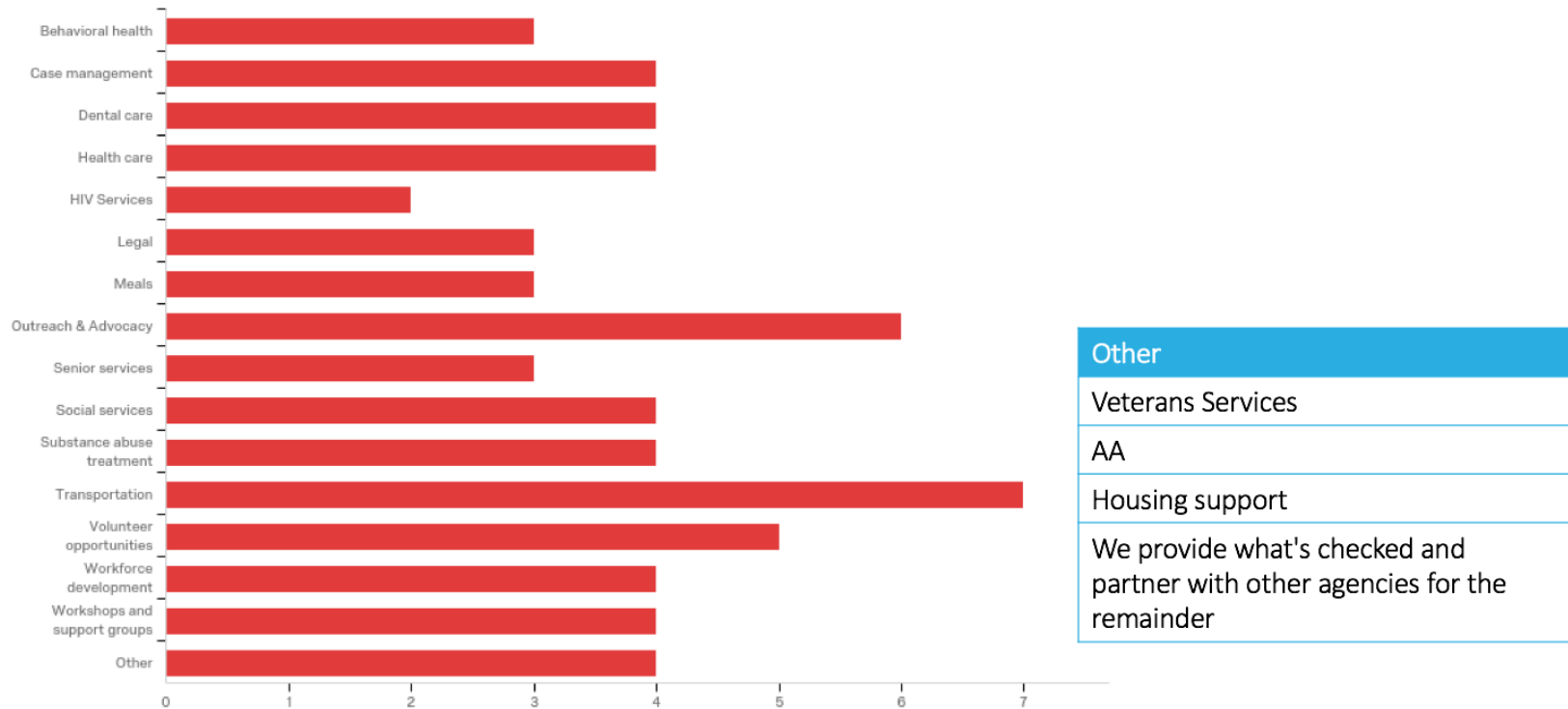
Q31 - If you answered yes that your community has a target population that it primarily serves, what is your best guess of the percentage breakdown of residents by race at any given time? (Please enter the number as a percent. The total must sum to 100.)

Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.00	10.00	1.50	3.28	10.75	8
Asian	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6
Black or African American	0.00	35.00	5.63	11.58	133.98	8
Latino	0.00	10.00	2.50	4.33	18.75	8
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6
White	0.00	53.00	7.88	17.37	301.61	8
Other	0.00	10.00	1.25	3.31	10.94	8
Unknown	0.00	100.00	80.00	36.06	1300.00	8

Q32 - Are residents offered support services?



Q33 - If you answered yes to the previous question, please select all of the services that you provide.

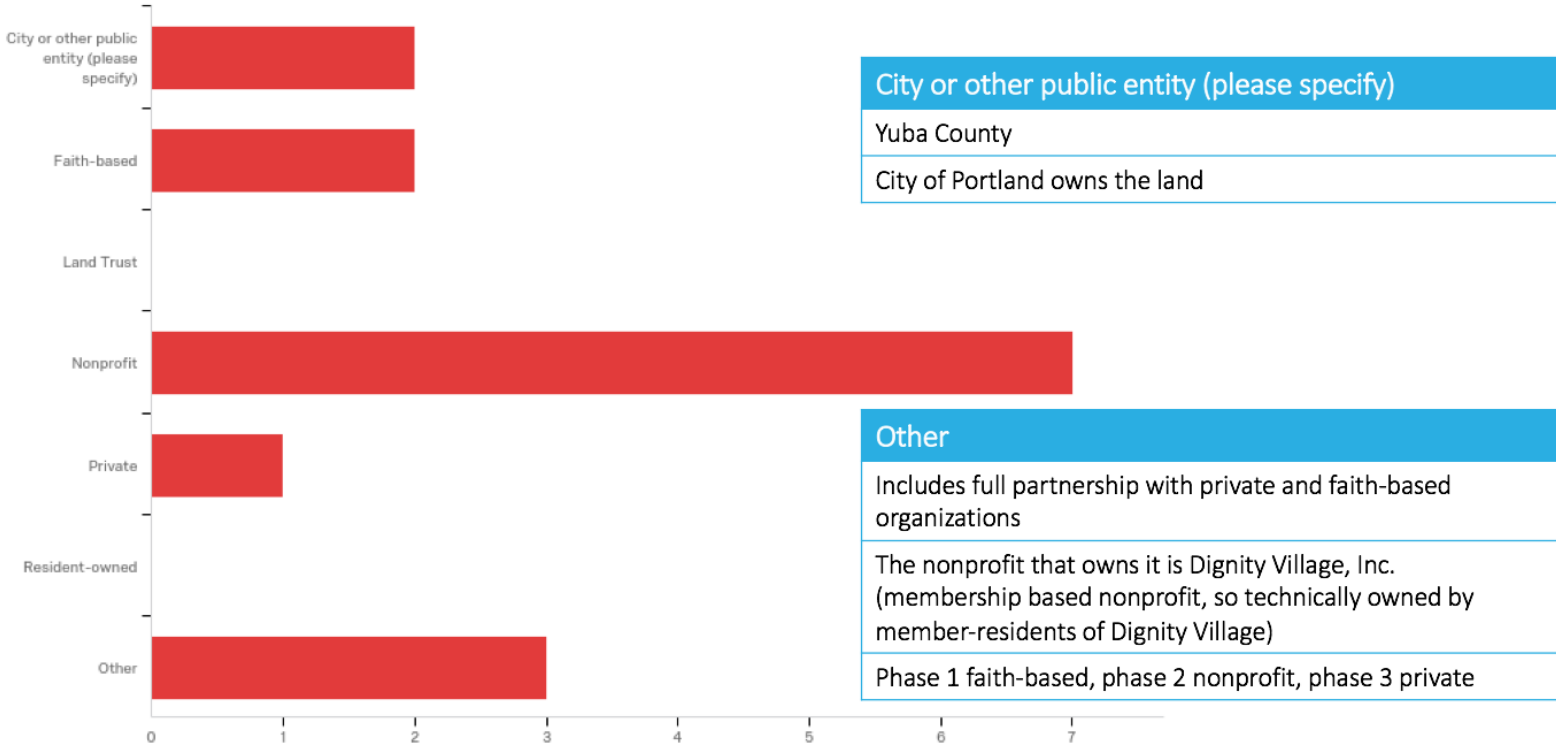




Q34 - Please enter how many full time employees (FTE) provide support.

Full time employees (FTE) #
3
6
4
47

Q35 - What type of entity owns your tiny home community? Please select all that apply.



## Q36 - How was the land originally acquired?

Land originally acquired
Land was given by the City of Fresno
Donated
City property or property owned by LIHI that is awaiting funding for other affordable housing developments.
Land is located in Marysville city limits and already owned by Yuba County.
We incorporated into a non-profit and the organization bought a piece of property that was for sale.
Bought privately and donated.
City Council motion passed to lease city-owned land to a non-profit for \$1/year.
Leased to Dignity Village by the City of Portland. Dignity Village is the contracted organization that's operating a "transitional housing campground" (per Oregon code) on city-owned land.
Phases 1(short-term) and 2 (transitional) are master leased by NPO and phase 3 (permanent) are owned by LLC's with both NPO and for profit ownership.

Q37 - What were the capital costs associated with building your tiny home community? Please enter cost of the land (if any) separately. Please do not include sweat equity in the estimate. If applicable, you will be asked to provide an estimate number of hours of sweat equity in a follow up question.

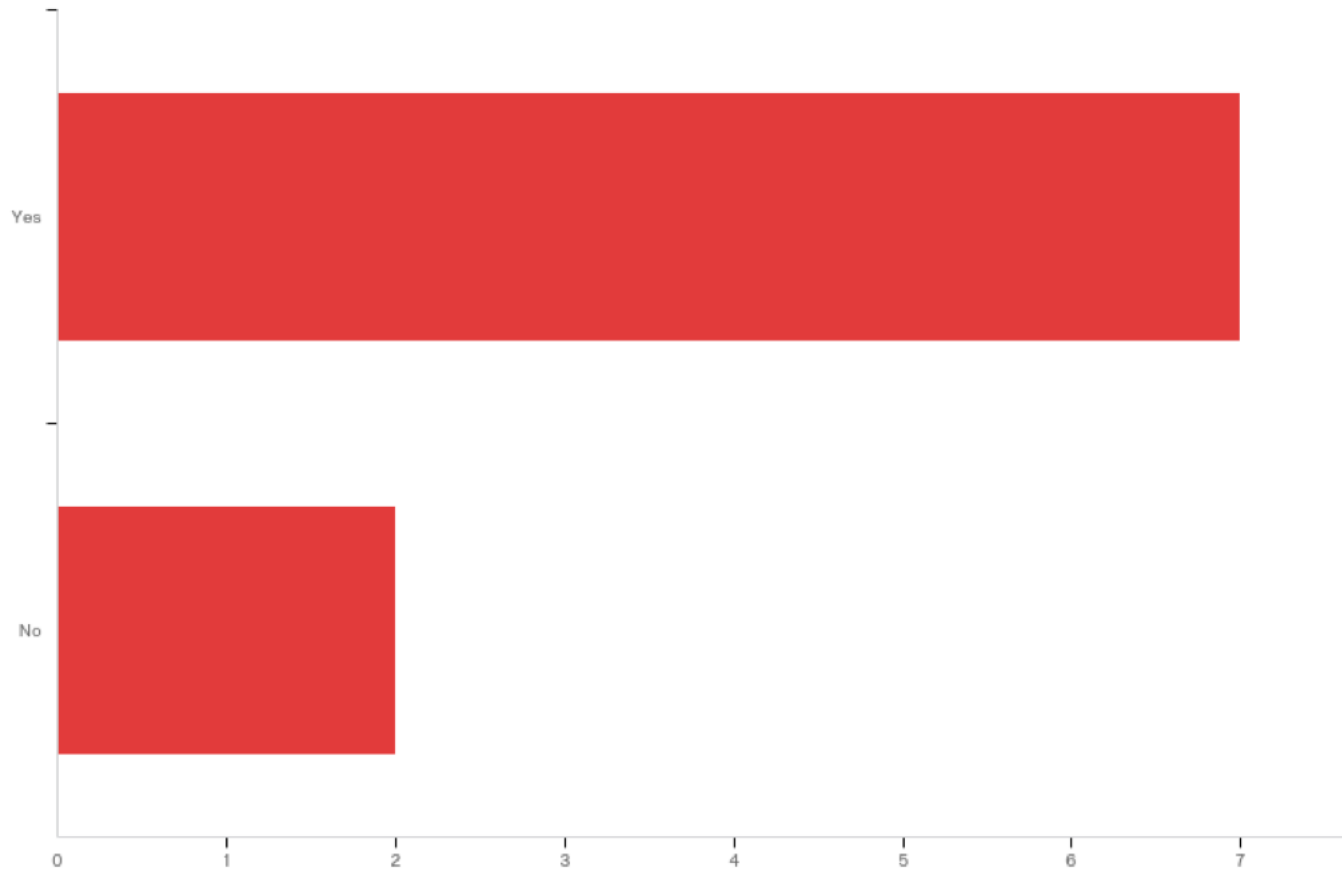
Startup Total*			Land Cost			Cost/Unit**		
Amount	Fund Sources	Notes	Amount	Fund Sources	Notes	Amount	Fund Sources	Notes
				I do not have this information readily available. We used a combination of bank loan, personal loans, and fund raising		\$4,000	Fundraising	
\$0			\$0			\$3,500	County; Donations	
\$7,500	Churches; Private					\$15,000	Churches; Private	
\$7,000,000	Individuals; Foundations	95% individuals	\$350,000	A couple	They even made money on the purchase after donating it. Land values keep rising in Austin!	\$10,000,000	70% individuals; 30% foundations	No government funds were used in the build out of this community
\$100,000		Funded by local donations and grants	\$0			\$3,333		
\$184,000	City of Portland	Site improvements paid for by various City bureaus, including fencing, re-paving, electrical service, sewers, drainage, potable water, moving of dirt berm, etc.	\$0		Land use is provided for free under contract.	\$2,000	In-kind material donation; Private donations	This is a rough estimate***

\* Excluding land

\*\*Excluding volunteer time/sweat equity.

\*\*\*It was less expensive when Dignity Village was starting because we had an economy of scale for material donations and volunteer hours. These days, we estimate \$2000 for replacing a structure.

Q38 - Did volunteers provide sweat equity to build units?



Q39 - If you answered yes to the previous question, how many hours of sweat equity would you estimate went into building units? Please enter the total number of hours as a number. Your best guess is fine.

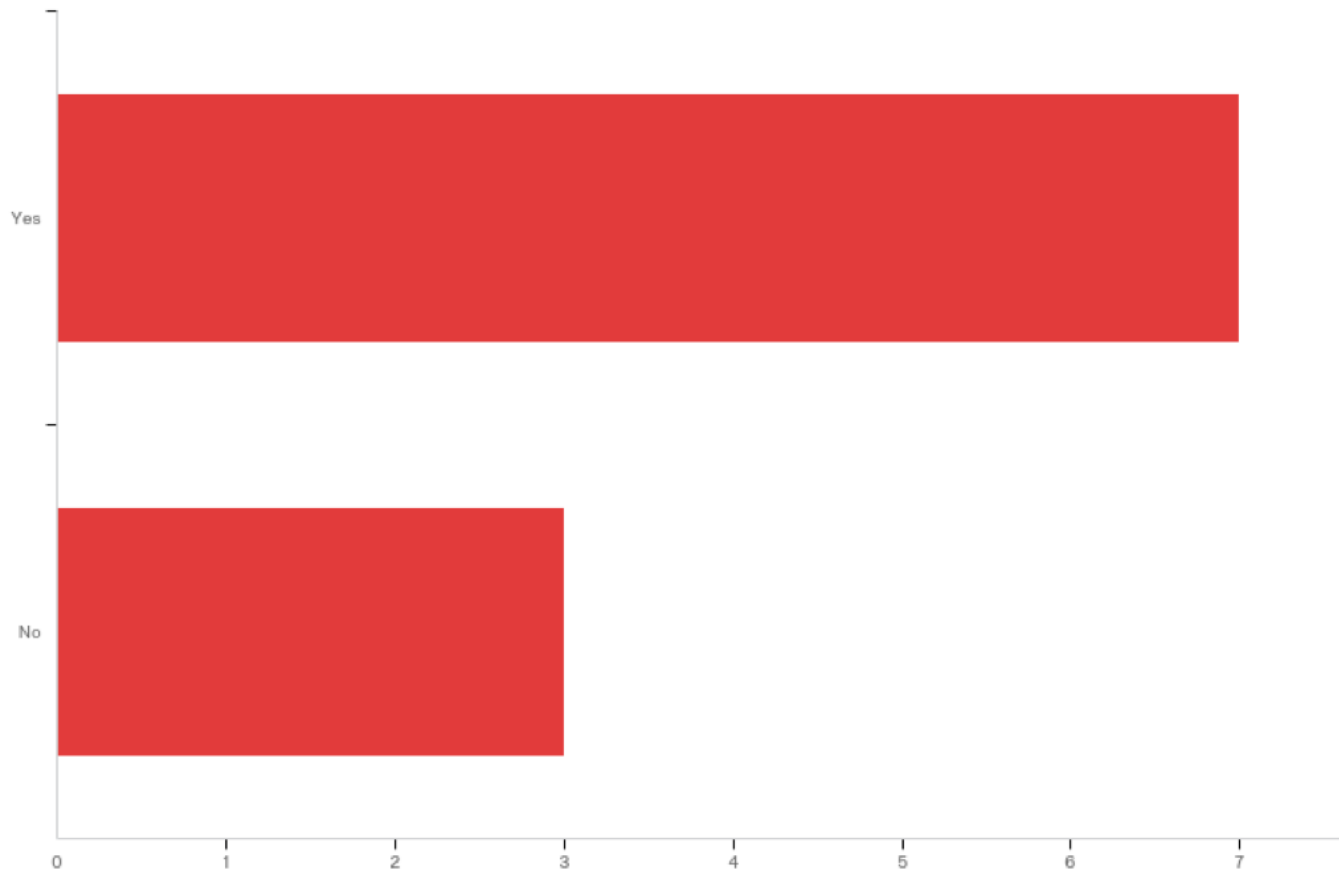
Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
3.00	20000.00	3399.00	6828.76	46632014.57	7

Q40 - What are the operating costs associated with running your tiny home community?

Total Cost		Resident Cost/Month*	
Amount	Fund Sources	Amount	Notes
			The 7 residents are rent subsidized through a HUD Bonus Project applied for by Illumination Foundation. Illumination Foundation provides case management services for their 7 clients and VA provides case management for their 8 clients.
\$400	Resident; Churches; Private; Agency	\$200	
\$1,250	Micro-enterprises/retail store; Fundraising	\$0	No minimum. Residents contribute what they can according to their ability.
\$30,000	20,000 (?)		
\$30,000/year	Resident monthly payments; Firewood sale (microbusiness); Scrap metal program (microbusiness); Private donations	\$35	
\$45,000/year	Local donations and grants	\$30	
\$120,000/year		\$0	
\$1,500,000	Rent 60%; Individuals 15%; Foundations	\$225-\$430	Each unit has a set cost. Formerly homeless choose unit they like and show they can afford it by SSI or by one of our micro-enterprises or by an outside job.

\*If cost is a percentage of income or if there is a set minimum, please explain in the notes section.

Q41 - Are residents required to perform chores or other work as part of the cost of living in the unit?

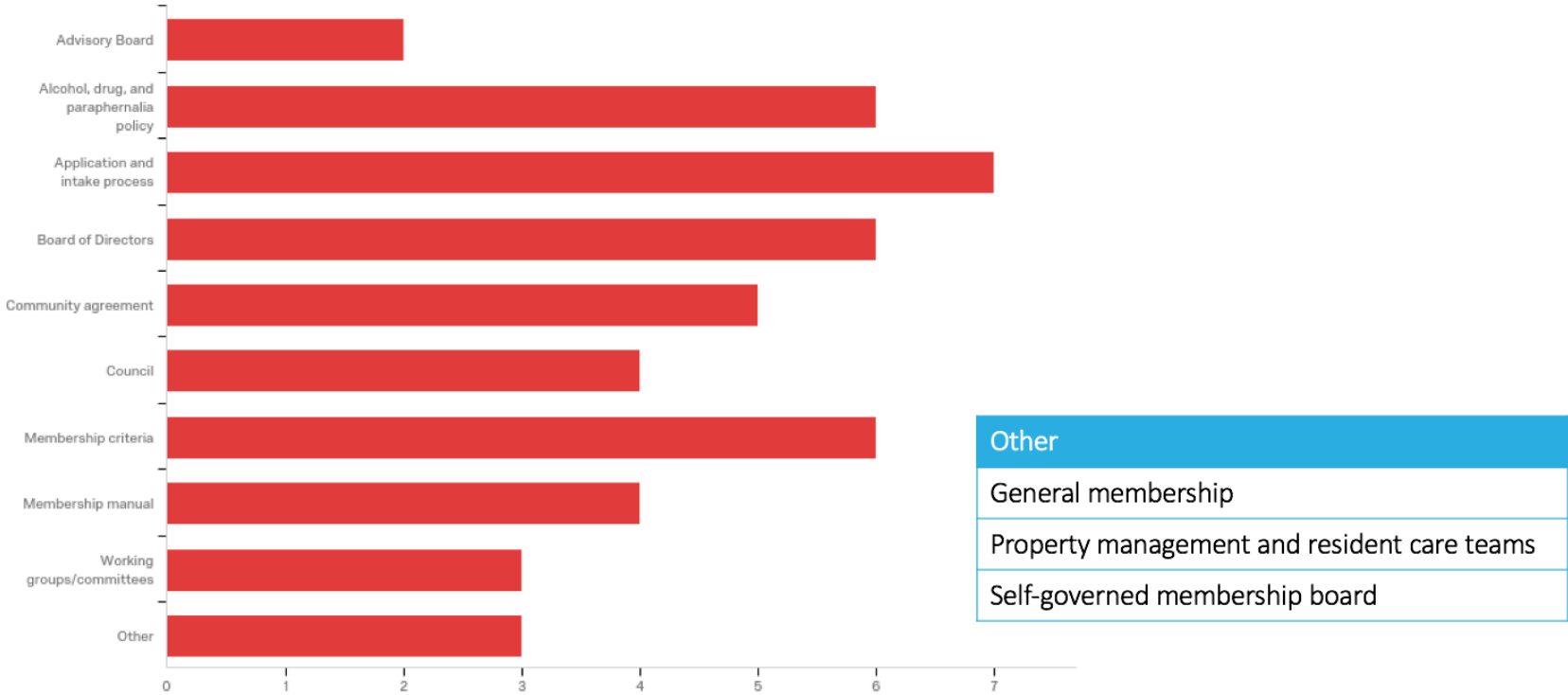




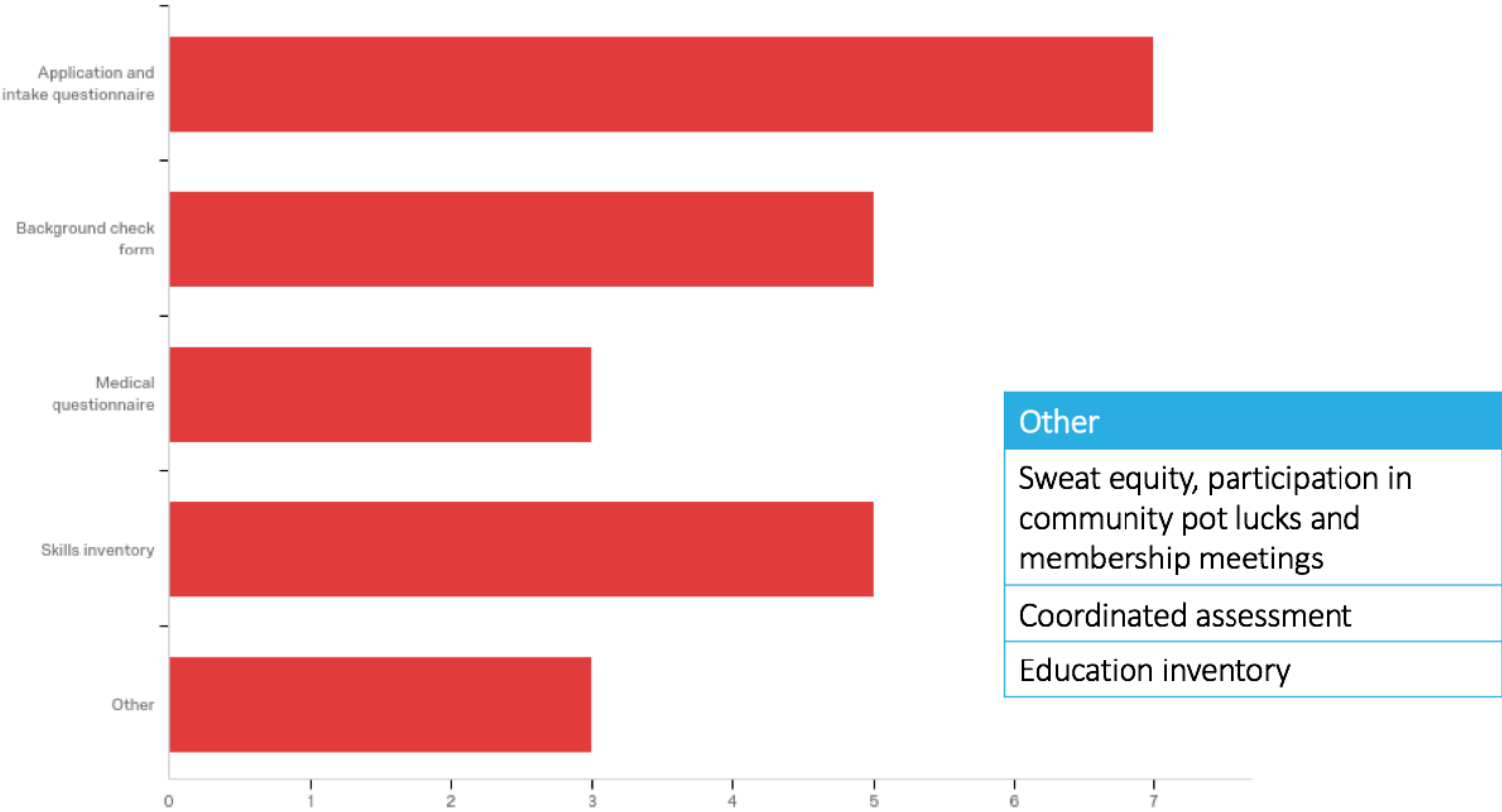
Q42 - If you answered yes to the previous question, how many hours of chores are residents required to contribute per month? Please enter the total number of hours as a number. Your best guess is fine.

Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1.00	40.00	16.86	12.43	154.41	7

Q43 - What, if any, of the following aspects of governance structure do you have in place? Please select all that apply.



Q44 - If you selected "application and intake process" in the previous question, please select what your process includes. Please select all that apply.



Q45 - If you selected "membership criteria" in the previous question, please write what your criteria are in the space below.

#### Membership criteria

Not a selection option - but the criteria depend on the site. Some sites require sobriety on site, while others do not. Some require participation and a willingness to contribute to the community.

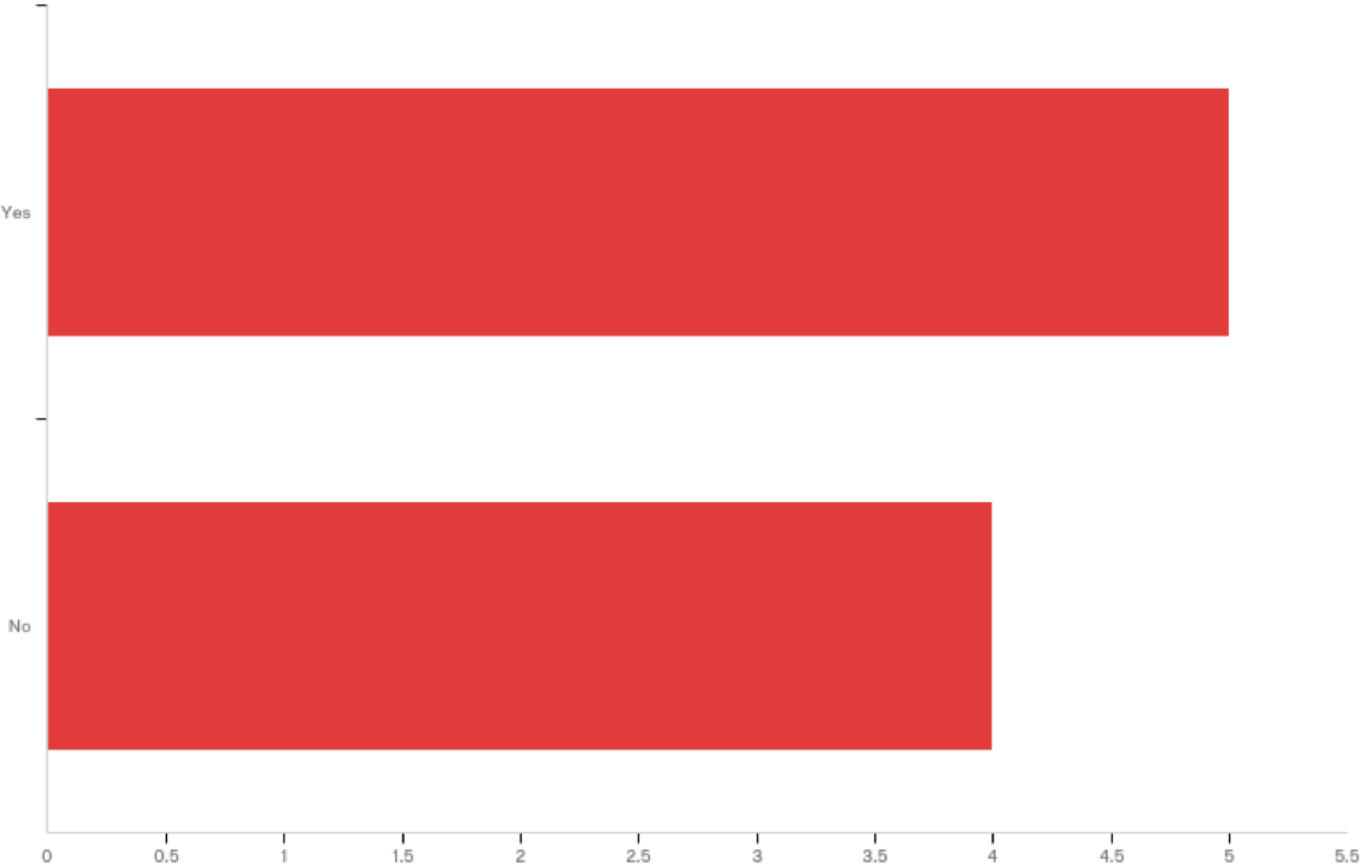
The main criteria is "good fit," i.e. the ability to function in a cooperative living situation. Because we don't have paid staff or service providers the ability to have living cooperatively who are in active addiction or have serious anti-social behaviors. People with these types of issues are often self-selected out as they are unable to complete the sweat equity portion.

Qualifies as chronically homeless (HUD definition). If applying for Mission Community, sweat equity required as well as resident blessing.

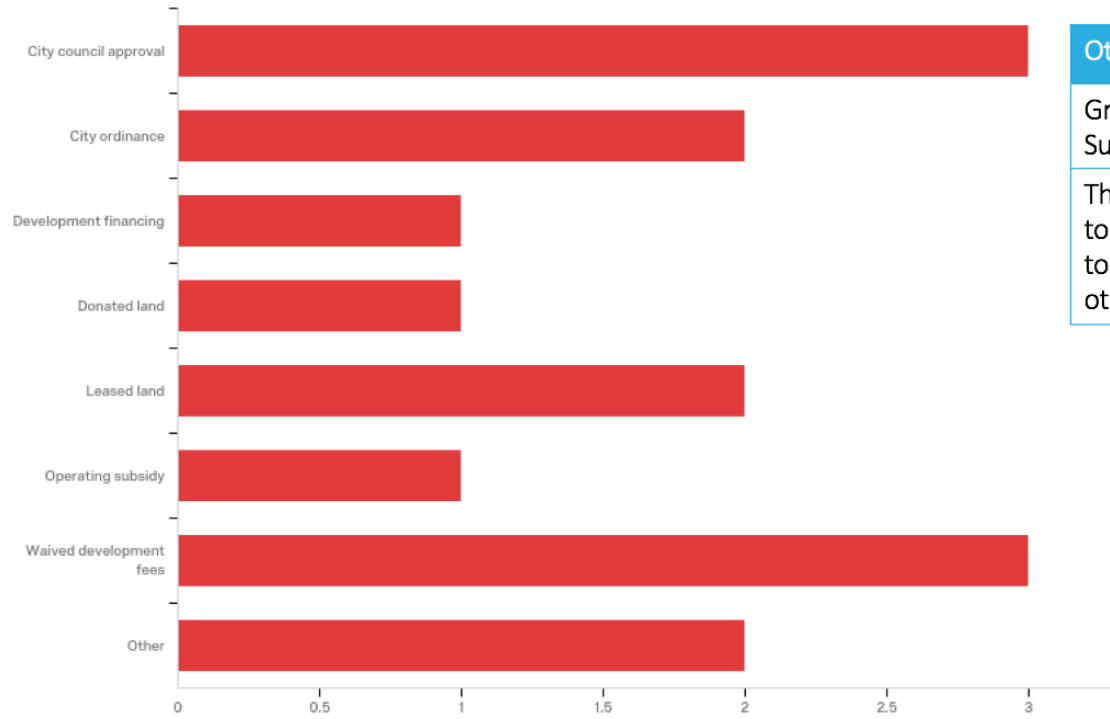
1. Currently un-housed.
2. Willing to live according to the community agreement, most importantly, be willing to live in a drug, alcohol and violence free environment.
3. Willing and able to participate in the day to day life and governance of the village.
4. Willing to undergo a criminal background check and interview process. (Anyone with a criminal history of violent or aggravated sexual assault, and anyone not permitted to be near children due to a sexual predation history are not eligible for village membership).
5. Must be at least 18 years of age.

Over 18 is our only criteria.

Q46 - Do you currently or have you received support from the city or county for your community?



### Q47 - What type of support did you receive?



**Other**  
Grants, community donations, Board of Supervisors Approval  
They worked with the transportation authority to get a bus line created that runs from Village to Grocery store and connects with several other bus lines

Q48 - Please share more about the type of support that you received from the city or county for your community here.

Type of support received from the city or county for community

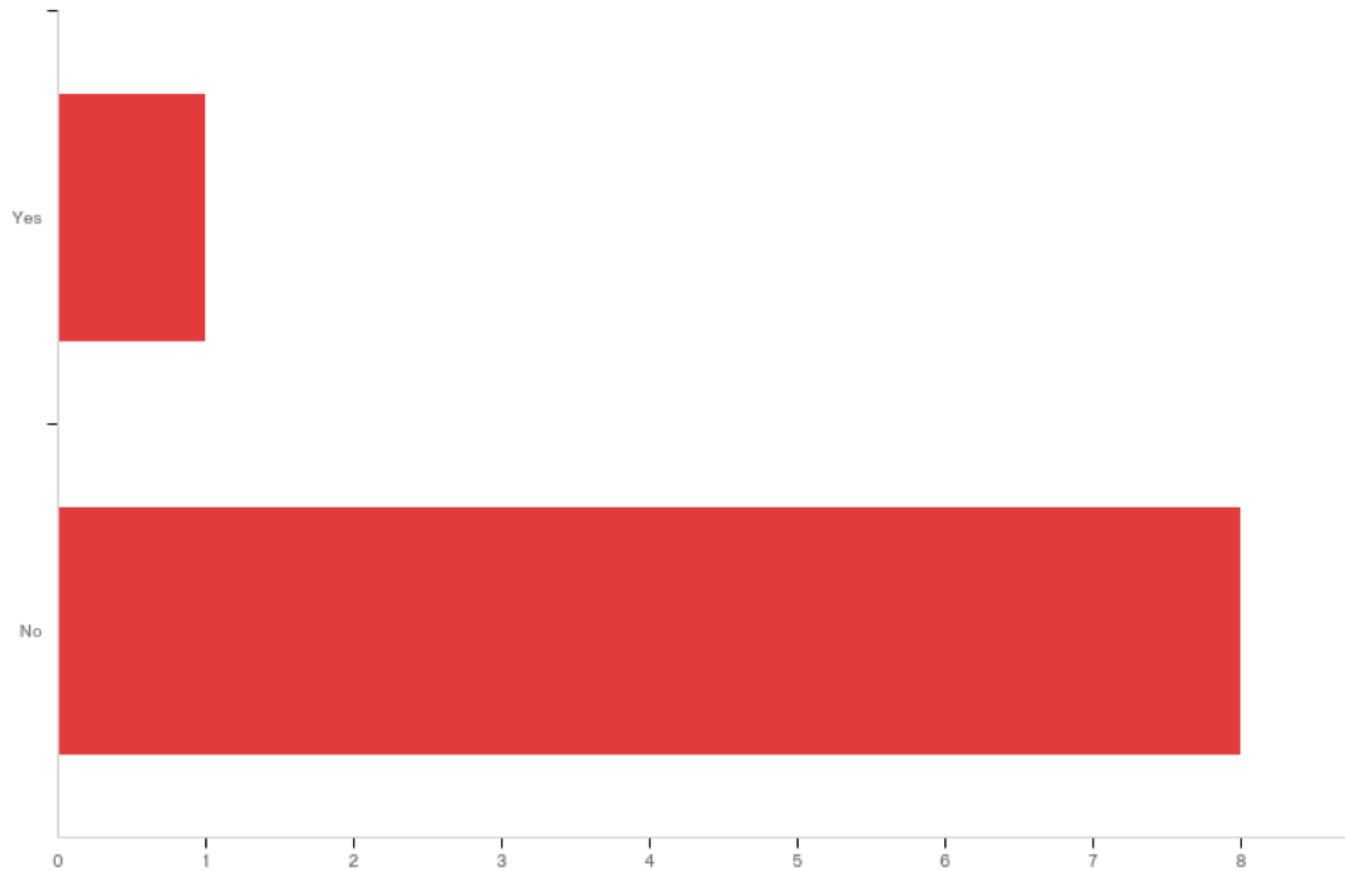
The City of Seattle's Human Services Department has helped to finance and facilitate our program. Many of our sites are located on City property. The City helps with community relations and engagement, as well as with operations and the intake procedure. Most of Seattle's city council is in support of expanding the program as the homelessness problem is well above crisis levels and options for shelter are limited.

The Board of Supervisors established an initial budget. Community organizations and individuals donated over \$100,000 to offset costs in the first year of operation. This include sponsors purchasing more than half of the sheds.

They spoke glowingly of eliminating homeless veterans from the streets.

Contract manager at the city who is our point person for navigating any needs.

Q49 - Did you apply for funding for your tiny home community and get turned down?





Q50 - What type of use is the site that the community is in classified as? (e.g. multi-family dwelling, rooming house, mobile home park, etc.)

Type of use the site is classified as (e.g. multi-family dwelling, rooming house, mobile home park, etc.)
Its not a community
Emergency Shelter
County owned property
We are within a single-family home neighborhood. We had to get a special zoning permit for our village, we are designated as a mixed use planned development.
ETJ (Texas rules!)
Homeless shelter
Designated Campground
Church/Shelter/RV

Q51 - Does the community have zoning approval or other approval from local government? Please explain below.

Zoning approval or other approval from local government
Yes we are in a multi-use area.
Yes, we have approval to use commercially and industrially-zoned land. There is an ordinance change in the works that will allow for residentially-zoned land. Our program also operates on religiously-affiliated properties, for which a separate ordinance applies.
Yes. County-owned land with approval.
Yes. We won a planning commission designation which is entirely unique in the city; we are a mixed use planned development. We also had to go through city council (common council) approval.
No
Yes, we followed a conditional use permit for the site. More info on this at: <a href="http://www.ecobuilding.org/code-innovations/case-studies/transitional-micro-housing-at-opportunity-village-eugene">http://www.ecobuilding.org/code-innovations/case-studies/transitional-micro-housing-at-opportunity-village-eugene</a>
Church/Shelter/RV

Q52 - Did you encounter any local challenges (e.g. design requirements, zoning, permit fees, etc.)? What did you do to overcome these obstacles? Please explain below.

### Local challenges

**We had to set up an emergency permitting process** for the construction and inspection of shower facilities and bathroom facilities, which the City's construction and inspections department (SDCI) were accommodating with. This program piggy backs on decades of city opposition to illegal tent city encampments - much of the progress that we have seen is a result of advocacy efforts from those in the "unhoused" community who have pushed for sanctioned spaces to exist.

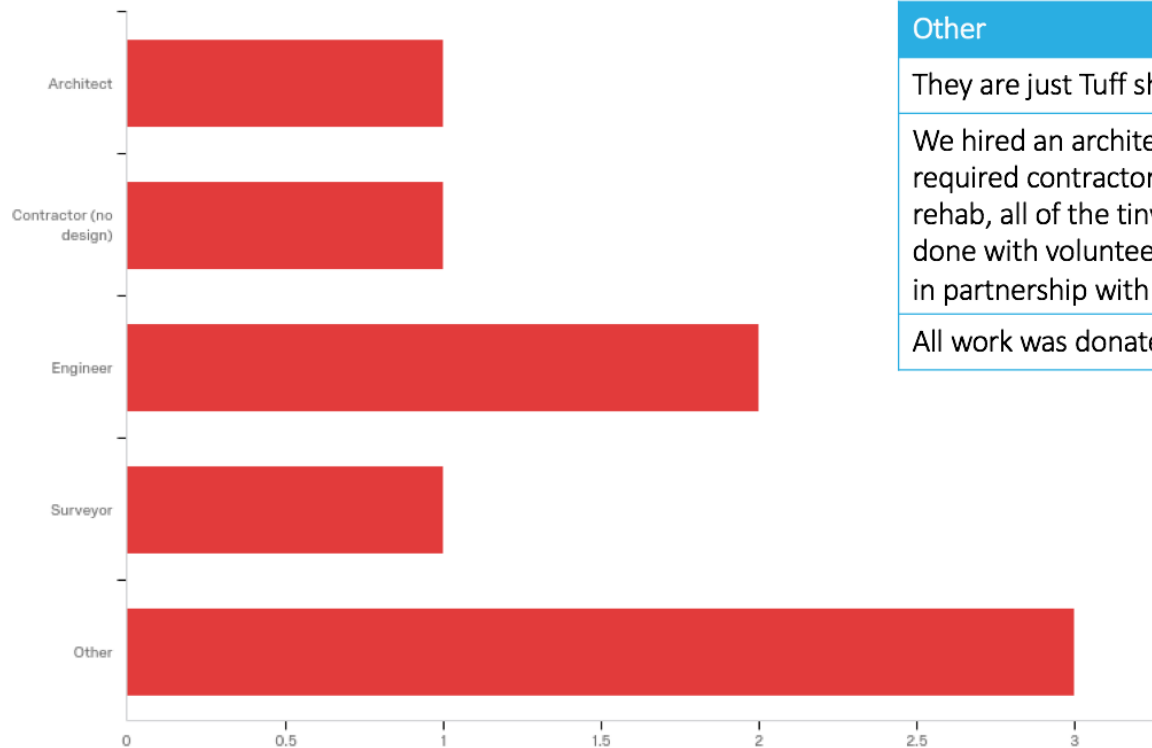
**There had to be coordinated cooperation with city public safety.** Also, California Housing Authority threatened to shut down our effort because we did not clear our efforts through them, and they felt the units did not meet their standards. We explained the units were "emergency shelters." Our Board approved an Emergency Declarations that offset their concerns.

**In addition to the above options listed in this survey, we encountered neighborhood concerns.** We overcame these obstacles via seemingly endless meetings with city, county, commissions, and neighbors. To answer these questions in depth would require writing a book.

**We had to go through the County Commissioners Court** but it was a perfunctory vote which went unanimous in our favor.

**General design requirement parameters.** We included specific parameters for design requirements that were approved by the building inspector within the contract. As long as we stick to these, we don't need to pull permits for any individual structure.

Q53 - If applicable, which of the following did you hire to help you construct your tiny homes?



#### Other

They are just Tuff sheds

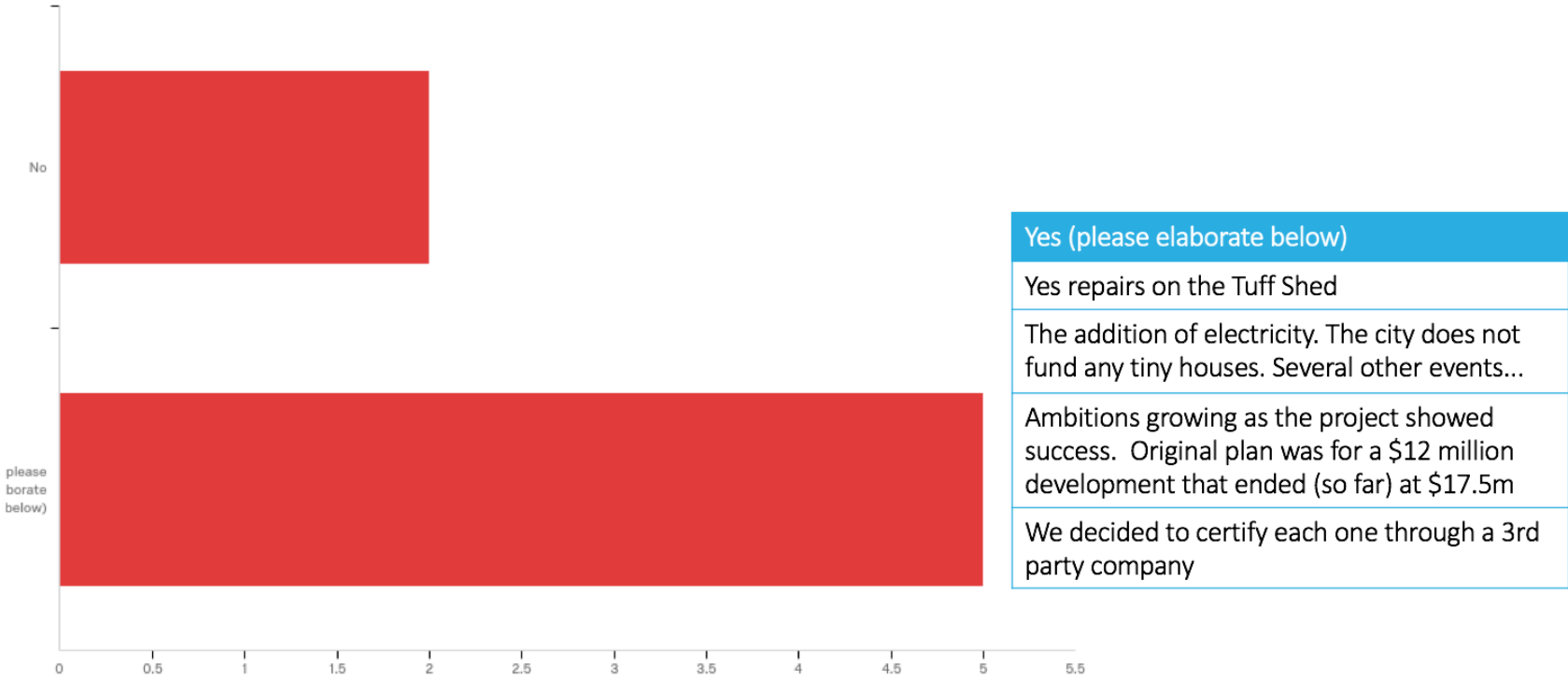
We hired an architect for the site design, as well as a required contractor for part of the community building rehab, all of the tiny houses and most other site labor was done with volunteers. Some of the tiny houses were built in partnership with a local high school shop class.

All work was donated.

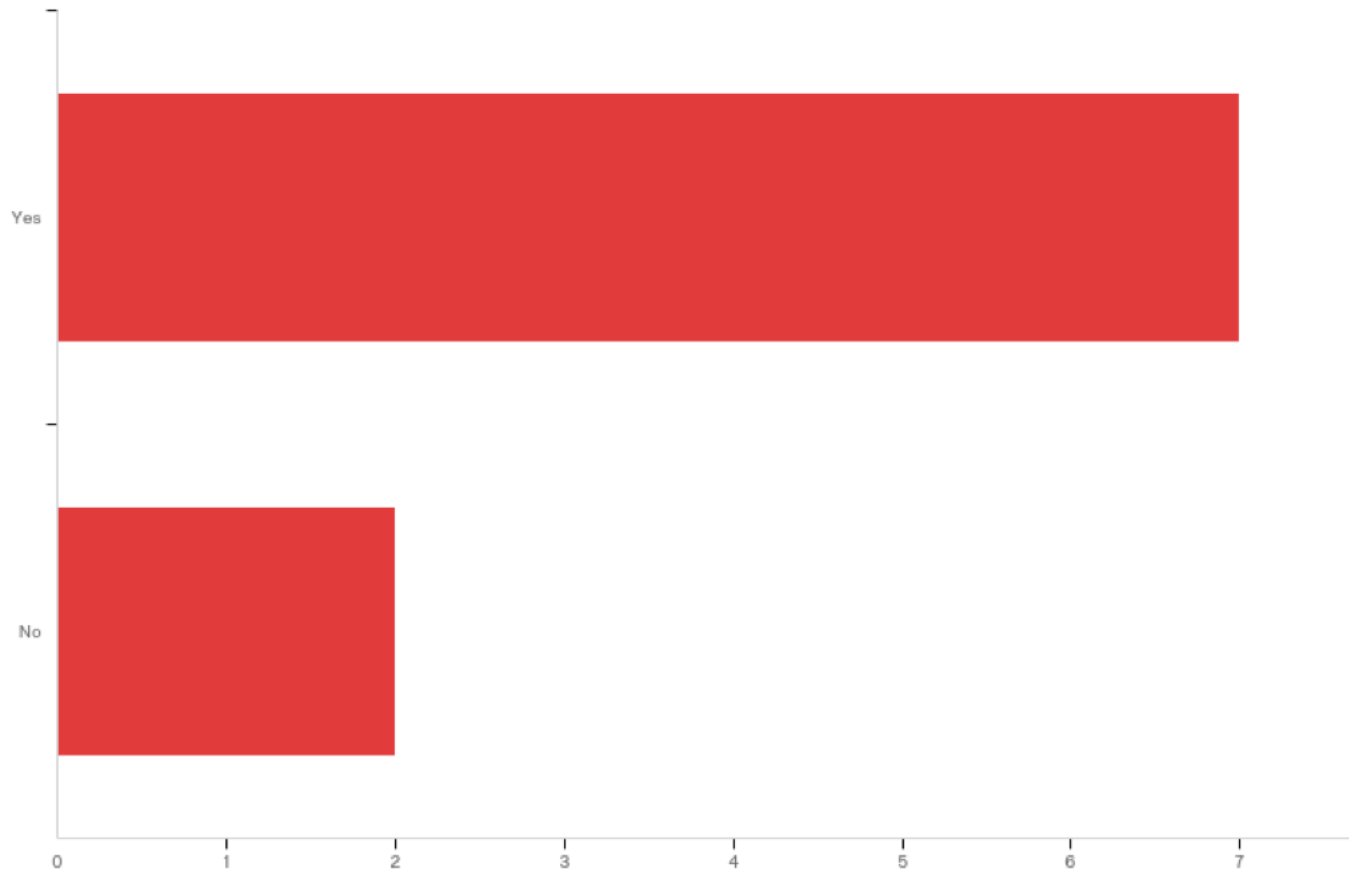
Q54 - How difficult was each step of the process of building your tiny home community? (0 = no difficulty; 10 = extremely difficult.)

Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
Fundraising	3.00	8.00	5.78	1.93	3.73	9
Designing	1.00	8.00	4.29	2.71	7.35	7
Permitting	3.00	10.00	6.57	2.19	4.82	7
Zoning	2.00	10.00	5.71	2.43	5.92	7
Constructing	1.00	8.00	4.38	2.18	4.73	8
Operational/ Management	4.00	10.00	7.63	2.06	4.23	8
Governance	2.00	10.00	6.57	2.72	7.39	7

Q55 - Were there any unanticipated events that led to delays and costs being higher?



Q56 - Do you have an evaluation system in place to collect data on community-wide and/or individual resident characteristics?



Q57 - Please share the metrics and outcomes that you track here.

Metrics and outcomes tracked
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How long they are in the Villages</li><li>• Exits to housing or the street</li></ul> HMIS is case management system
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Intake demographics</li><li>• Exit information (date, exit to where, etc.)</li><li>• Employment status</li><li>• Benefits received</li></ul> HMIS data as required by HUD
Participants are tracked according to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The types of services needed (job training, behavioral health, veterans, etc.)</li><li>• Referrals to services</li><li>• Transportation</li><li>• Skills/competency</li><li>• Adherence to program requirements</li><li>• <i>Additional items</i></li></ul>



## Q58 - Please share the metrics and outcomes that you track here (continued)

### Metrics and outcomes tracked

Multi-year study currently being conducted at the Village through the American Enterprise Institute and funded by the Austin Institute.

We track

- Resident demographics
- Length of stay
- Where people are coming from
- Where people go upon leaving the village

Quarterly report tracks metrics for the City of Eugene.

During intake, we report quarterly to our city contract manager and collect data on:

- General demographics (age, gender, race, disability, employment status, etc.).

We also report on:

- How long people have lived at Dignity Village (each quarter, for every resident)
- Where folks move to (broadly: if they left voluntarily or for rules violations, then a tally of housing type: section 8, moved in with friends, rental housing, etc.)

Q59 - While we tried to be comprehensive in selecting the questions to include in this survey, there surely are issues that we have not considered. If there is anything else about your experience with your tiny home community that you would like to tell us about, please write it below.

### Additional questions

**Self governance is important.** Do not assume that folks living unhoused are able to make decisions for folks living outdoors. Providing meaningful forums for participation gives residents a sense of ownership over the program, which helps to increase cohesion, contribution, and progress in the villages. The institution of rules "from above", without considering or asking residents, will greatly diminish the sense of agency that is a tiny house village or encampment's most positive feature.

**We don't consider our temporary shelters to be tiny homes.** Our village consists of shelters (no power, no running water) for transitional purposes, not 'tiny homes.' Service provision comes from 14Forward being set up right beside an existing mission, which provides two meals each day and showers. Laundry is provided by Juvenile Hall. A larger building is located onsite for counseling, training, assessment, etc.

**Optimal staffing:** A small number of paid staff and a social worker or two would optimize success in the long run and minimize volunteer burnout. Volunteers can be good for "sexy" projects like building a house or garden, but the difficult, grinding work is interpersonal in nature and MUST be done by the same core group of people who can earn trust and friendship but who are then vulnerable to burnout and resentment. It can be too much for volunteers as it looks a lot like a lifetime commitment.

**Why some villages choose tiny homes on wheels:** We had to move forward in the "gray". We ultimately used the RV code, mixed with our city's allowance to let churches provide short-term housing and "verbal" commitments from the City and County they would get the right zoning in place. Ultimately, we have everything on wheels at this point so we can adjust if necessary. If/when the city/county changes zoning, we will build permanent versions with their own bath, kitchen, etc. These are also quick and a tangible project anyone in the community can pull a team around.

**Community characteristics:** What is the number of visitors that the tiny house community has seen? Does the tiny house community have ongoing annual volunteers?

**Additional sources of income:** Is there additional income from micro-enterprises? We raised \$200k this year!

**Surrounding community:** What has the neighborhood and city response been to the tiny house community?

Q60 - What is your name? (Please enter your first and last name in the space below.)

First and last name
Andrew Heben
Bradford Gerber
Katie Mays
Russ Brown
Sara Mirhadi
Scott Goodrich
Steven Hebbard
Tammy Vallejo
Trina Clemente

## Q61 - What is your title?

Title
CEO
Communications Coordinator
Director of Education and Outreach
Director of Program Development
Program Coordinator
Project Director, SquareOneVillages
Program Support Specialist
Volunteer, board member

## Q62 - What is the best email address to reach you?

Email address
andrew@squareonevillages.org
bradgerber@lihi.org
goodrichithaca@aol.com
kmays@joinpdx.org
mirhadi@poverellohouse.org
rbrown@co.yuba.ca.us
steven@mlf.org
tammy@e49corp.org
tclemente@rocketmail.com

Q63 - What is the best phone number to reach you?

Phone number
559-498-6988
206-472-3672
530-749-7575
608-213-2686
512-921-1632
937-681-8044
971-276-1297
916-849-4577

Appendix B: Bay Area Safe Organized Spaces Select Planning Group Regional Landscape Scan

The below table is a landscape scan that was put together by members of a planning group for Bay Area Safe Organized Spaces in December 2017. The planning group solicited information for the following counties: Alameda; Contra Costa; Fresno; Marin; Monterey; Sacramento; San Francisco; San Mateo; Santa Clara; Santa Cruz; Solano; Sonoma; and Yuba.

County	City	<b>Type</b> Government: City/County/Nonprofit; Autonomous/Community-Based; Political Organizing; Individuals with Ideas	Name	Description
Alameda	Berkeley	Government: City/County/Nonprofit	City of Berkeley Pathways Project	N/A
Alameda	Berkeley	Government: City/County/Nonprofit	First They Came for the Homeless	Have relocated to south end of Aquatic Park. All tents in City are being left alone until the 11/28 court order deadline is reconciled.
Alameda	Oakland	Government: City/County/Nonprofit	Operation Dignity/Bay Area community services	The city and its contracted nonprofits will be running what they call “safe havens” which are comparable to SF’s navigation centers
Alameda	Oakland	Government: City/County/Nonprofit	St. Vincent de Paul, Henry J. Robinson, Roots, several churches	Engage in a wide range from food services to housing developments

Alameda	Oakland	Government: City/County/Nonprofit	Homeless Advocacy Working Group	Community-driven entity formed out of The Village to advocate and lobby for the decriminalization of homelessness, housing as a human right, and homes for all
Alameda	Oakland	Government: City/County/Nonprofit	Oakland Warehouse Coalition	N/A
Alameda	Oakland	Government: City/County/Nonprofit	RCD  EBADC  ABODE	N/A
Alameda	Oakland	Autonomous/Community- Based	East Oakland Collective	Provides services to unsheltered in east and deep east and is working with The Village to build temp and permanent homes in from High street to the 100s
Alameda	Oakland	Autonomous/Community- Based	Feed the People	Provides hot meals, provisions, advocacy and defense to Oakland's encampments from High street to North Oakland. Co-founder of The Village.
Alameda	Oakland	Autonomous/Community- Based	The Village	Seeks to decriminalize homelessness, assert housing as a human right and build a pathway to self-sufficiency that begins with temporary shelter/services and supports and ends with permanent housing.



Alameda	Oakland	Autonomous/Community-Based	Qilombo	Services and support for unsheltered. Black Land Liberation Initiative - free up land for public use, including shelter and spaces for the unhoused.
Alameda	Oakland	Autonomous/Community-Based	Punks with Lunches	Provide meals, provisions and needle exchange to West Oakland encampments.
Alameda	Oakland	Autonomous/Community-Based	Food Not Bombs	Provides hot meals and groceries to homeless.
Alameda	Oakland	Political Organizing	The Village	A direct action that became a movement that is transforming into a membership-based housing for the homeless generator.
Alameda	Oakland	Individuals	Jhamel Robinson; Phyliss McGee; Ken Houston; Brother Ali	N/A
Contra Costa	Richmond	Government: City/County/Nonprofit	Homeless Task Force	Successfully steered toward prioritizing: mobile outreach to encampments; "Safe Park" & alternative Winter Shelter approaches; dedicated homeless funding. Daniel Barth currently advocating to council to consider

				Self-Managed Villages. Identified potential SOS site on city land, with some initial stakeholder buy-in.
Contra Costa	Walnut Creek	Government: City/County/Nonprofit	Homeless Task Force	Convened in Sept to pursue innovative approaches; heard Sanctuary
Contra Costa	East County	Government: City/County/Nonprofit	Encampment presentation	Large need, unknown efforts toward SOS
Contra Costa	N/A	Autonomous/Community-Based	Winter Nights (interfaith initiative)	Launching 'Safe Sleep' in '18 for families in cars to park at Community Presbyterian Church, Pittsburg
Contra Costa	N/A	Autonomous/Community-Based	Interfaith ACTION Coalition	Receptive to Sanctuary Encampment presentation
Contra Costa	N/A	Political Organizing	Shelter First!	Daniel Barth seeks incorporators and fiscal sponsor to launch 501c3 to act as advocacy arm (modeled on SHARE/WHEEL) to facilitate unsanctioned camp residents to initiate SOSs in CC County; Volunteers sought to work alongside County CORE outreach to assess resident needs/interests to steer toward SOSs
Fresno	N/A	Government: City/County/Nonprofit	Poverello House	The shelter provider in Fresno who manages the two sanctioned encampments there, the Village of Hope and the Community of Hope

Fresno	N/A	Political Organizing	Mike Rhodes: <a href="mailto:mikerhodes@comcast.net">mikerhodes@comcast.net</a>	Most knowledgeable person on Fresno's homelessness and housing policy. Helped organize initial safe spaces with toilets and sanitation prior to the sanctioned encampments in the city. Continues to organize with campers against city-led evictions. Worked on ACLU case suing the city for the destruction of homeless property.
Fresno	N/A	Individuals with Ideas	Art Dyson	Local architect who has been kicking around the idea for tiny house eco-village for the unhoused for years.
Marin	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Monterey	N/A	Government: City/County/Nonprofit	Lead Me Home	N/A
Monterey	N/A	Government: City/County/Nonprofit	CARS (Coordinated Assessment Referral System)	N/A
Monterey	N/A	Government: City/County/Nonprofit	Salinas Warming Shelter (Dec 1 or later)	N/A
Monterey	N/A	Government: City/County/Nonprofit	Lapis Road RV Overnight Parking (until Nov 30 or later)	N/A
Monterey	N/A	Government: City/County/Nonprofit	County funded Safe Parking Program (Dec 1 or later)	N/A
Monterey	N/A	Government: City/County/Nonprofit	Downtown Streets Team (possibly)	N/A
Monterey	N/A	Government: City/County/Nonprofit	Dorothy's Place	N/A

Monterey	N/A	Government: City/County/Nonprofit	First Methodist	N/A
Monterey	N/A	Government: City/County/Nonprofit	Victory Mission	N/A
Monterey	N/A	Government: City/County/Nonprofit	Interim	N/A
Monterey	N/A	Government: City/County/Nonprofit	Coalition of Homeless Service Providers	N/A
Monterey	N/A	Government: City/County/Nonprofit	Community Homeless Solutions	N/A
Monterey	N/A	Autonomous/Community- Based	One Starfish (safe parking)	N/A
Monterey	N/A	Autonomous/Community- Based	Pass the Word ministries	N/A
Monterey	N/A	Autonomous/Community- Based	Salinas Tent City	N/A
Monterey	N/A	Autonomous/Community- Based	Help U Get Support (HUGS)	N/A
Monterey	N/A	Autonomous/Community- Based	Homeless Educated Majority People (HEMP)	N/A
Monterey	N/A	Autonomous/Community- Based	Flagpole Community Protest at city hall (2-9/2016)	N/A
Monterey	N/A	Autonomous/Community- Based	PHLUSH (Personal Hygiene Lets Us Stay Human)	N/A

Monterey	N/A	Autonomous/Community-Based	Rules Run Tent Encampment (6 months in 2013)	N/A
Monterey	N/A	Political Organizing	Salinas Homeless Union	N/A
Monterey	N/A	Political Organizing	Lapis Road RV Homeowners' Association	N/A
Monterey	N/A	Political Organizing	Monterey County Homeless Advocates	N/A
Monterey	N/A	Political Organizing	Salinas Brown Berets	N/A
Monterey	N/A	Political Organizing	Salinas Indivisible	N/A
Monterey	N/A	Individuals with Ideas	Art Woodfin	Use Rodeo Grounds as campground (RV hookups, electricity plenty of space)
Sacramento	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
San Francisco	N/A	Government: City/County/Nonprofit	Navigation Centers	A City program for low-barrier shelters that fit under a Safe Organized Space framework as safe, organized alternatives to encampments, although they have a maximum time limit of 30-90 days which leads to hundreds of unstable exits. Although there are fewer restrictions and more autonomy than the City's traditional 90pday shelter system, there is no internal structure/process for participatory management, there is no restorative justice component, and people can maintain additional

				shelter outside of the Navigation Center.
San Francisco	N/A	Government: City/County/Nonprofit	Phil Tings' AB-932 and AB-857	Can move Safe Organized Spaces forward
San Francisco	N/A	Autonomous/Community-Based	Saint Francis Homelessness Challenge (SaintFrancisChallenge.org)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted organizing work and tried pilots at three existing encampments (Box City/7th Street/Various locations, The Pit/King Street Extension, Carolina Street)</li> <li>• Micro Pilot of 1 Transitional Shelter/Port-a-potty/Resident in Transition began 3 months ago (7/28) at Impact Hub SF with license agreement, insurance, and Community Integration Team.</li> <li>• Proposal in development to scale up pilot at an additional site to a 5-15 shelter, (7-20 resident) Transitional Village on private/public property with lease, insurance, and Community Integration Team.</li> <li>• Developed <a href="#">Encampment Livability Index Tool</a> for safety, health, and organizing support at existing, unsanctioned Encampments</li> </ul>

San Francisco	N/A	Autonomous/Community-Based	SOS Working Group	Draft proposal for 50 shelters/75 people on MTA parking lot and/or CalTrans land
San Francisco	N/A	Political Organizing	Saint Francis Homelessness Challenge	Working to create standards for both unsanctioned encampments and sanctioned Safe Organized Spaces
San Francisco	N/A	Political Organizing	SOS Working Group (SF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOS Petition for organizing/identifying sites/contacting elected officials: <a href="http://www.SafeOrganizedSpaces.org">www.SafeOrganizedSpaces.org</a></li> <li>• Phil Ting's AB-857 (State highways: property leases) makes it cost effective for SF to lease land under freeways from the Department of Transportation. Specifically the bill allows for "the lease amount for emergency shelter or feeding programs shall be for one dollar (\$1) per month." What recourse does the city have if this provision is not honored?</li> <li>• Phil Ting's AB-932 (Shelter crisis: homeless shelters) helps make it easier to build temporary shelter to those who need it in a timely fashion. Making it easier to build</li> </ul>

				shelters is just one piece of the puzzle (and we need local guidelines to be legislated). We still need land to build them on.
San Francisco	N/A	Political Organizing	San Francisco Coalition on Homelessness	Safe Sleep Policy
San Mateo	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Santa Clara	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Santa Cruz	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Solano	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sonoma	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Yuba	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A



## Appendix C: Request Letter: Alameda County Tiny Houses Study Information Request

Subject: Alameda County HCD Tiny Houses Study: Information Requested by 7/14 COB

Dear....,

It was nice to have a chance to meet many of you last week. I'm writing to follow up about the study that I mentioned that the Alameda County Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) is undertaking to assess to what extent cities in the county are considering tiny houses as a component of strategies to provide temporary or permanent housing for homeless households. We are compiling information to assess the desirability and feasibility of this strategy in Alameda County. People use the term 'tiny houses' to mean many different types of structures. Some examples of these and one possible definition are included below. We're happy to share the results of the study when completed.

### Information Requested

We are requesting the following information by no later than Friday, July 14<sup>th</sup>, COB to assist us with our study:

1. How would you characterize your city's interest in tiny houses as a partial strategy to shelter the city's homeless population? Is there interest at the city council level?
2. What zoning classifications would allow for development of tiny houses? Are these by right or would conditional use permits be required? Do you have any in place now? If so, please send a copy of the relevant sections.
3. Aside from zoning, what are any other local barriers/parameters to developing tiny houses? Please provide information on design requirements, permit fees, etc.
4. What parcels of land could potentially be used, either on an interim or long-term basis? Please specify if the land is city-owned.
5. What questions do you have about tiny houses and their feasibility that Alameda County can potentially include in our research?

***Finally, please provide contact information (email and phone number) for the best person to speak with on zoning issues and policy issues related to tiny houses.*** Please feel free to contact me (email: [Rebecca.Coleman@acgov.org](mailto:Rebecca.Coleman@acgov.org); phone: 510-670-5941) with any questions about the study.

Best,  
Rebecca Coleman

## Tiny Houses Definition

Tiny houses can vary in type, size, and configuration. The [California Department of Housing and Community Development](#) defines tiny houses as “ranging in size from 80-400 square feet, which may be built with a variety of standards or no construction standards; may or may not be constructed on a chassis (with or without wheels); and usually are offered for use and placement in a variety of sites.” However, tiny houses are subject to different criteria and review by different agencies depending on their construction. For example, tiny houses built on a chassis with wheels are not under HCD’s jurisdiction. Below please find some common examples of tiny houses.

## Tiny Houses Examples



**Makeshift Shelters**  
Informal shelters made from found materials by West Oakland artist.



**Accessory Dwelling Unit**  
Small cottage in backyard that is legally part of same property as main home.



**Tiny House on Wheels**  
Complies with existing code for trailers and RVs.



**“Tuff Shed”-like Shelters**  
Fresno provides transitional housing in a village configuration.



**Micro-apartments**  
Includes small studios or one-bedroom apartments and SRO units with communal spaces.

Rebecca Coleman  
Housing and Community Development Intern  
Alameda County Community Development Agency  
224 W. Winton Ave. Rm 108  
Hayward, CA 94544  
510-670-5941

Appendix D: Full Response Results: Alameda County Tiny Houses Study Information Request

City	Responded to Information Request?	1) How would you characterize your city's interest in tiny houses as a partial strategy to shelter the city's homeless population? Is there interest at the city council level?	2) What zoning classifications would allow for development of tiny houses? Are these by right or would conditional use permits be required? Do you have any in place now? If so, please send a copy of the relevant sections.	3) Aside from zoning, what are any other local barriers/parameters to developing tiny houses? Please provide information on design requirements, permit fees, etc.	4) What parcels of land could potentially be used, either on an interim or long-term basis? Please specify if the land is city-owned.	5) What questions do you have about tiny houses and their feasibility that Alameda County can potentially include in our research?
Alameda	Yes	<p><i>How would you characterize your city's interest in tiny houses as a partial strategy to shelter the city's homeless population? No. Is there interest at the city council level? Unsure, not really.</i></p> <p>It's not a topic that has hit my radar for Alameda in the past 3 years. The focus for the city</p>	They would be allowed as a form of ADU. By right if conforming to City's ADU regs. New Ordinance Adopted 7/5/2017 effective 8/7/2017. <sup>85</sup>	Design, location, compatibility with adjacent buildings, uses, safety regs, parking requirements for res units, open space requirements.	Only as ADU on residential parcels with a single family dwelling.	Based on local input the ADU scenario is the most feasible. If in the form of a freestanding community or collection of units, funding for property management would need to be identified.

<sup>85</sup> <https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3088693&GUID=7798F1C9-F95A-4C5E-9570-1F08066EA142&FullText=1>

		<p>is on new development of affordable and on ADUs.</p> <p>We are not looking at tiny houses for our developments either - it's not a good use of scarce land. We must build up and build densely to make it pencil out.</p>				
Albany	No					
Berkeley	Yes	<p>There has been some interest on the part of non-profits, activists, commissions and the City Council in tiny houses. We provided a report to Council on 10/18/2016 (see links below) regarding tiny houses where answers to some of your questions may be found. We also did a report on</p>	<p>38a. Tiny houses as a Strategy to Increase Housing for the Homeless in Berkeley<sup>86</sup>  From: Homeless Commission  Recommendation: Adopt a Resolution or other recommendation for the following purposes: 1) to support the concept of a Tiny houses development in Berkeley; 2) to pass enabling legislation</p>			

<sup>86</sup> [http://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City\\_Council/2016/10\\_Oct/Documents/2016-10-18\\_Item\\_38a\\_Tiny\\_Homes\\_as\\_a\\_Strategy.aspx](http://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City_Council/2016/10_Oct/Documents/2016-10-18_Item_38a_Tiny_Homes_as_a_Strategy.aspx)

		<p>2/14/17 on City-owned land (see third link below) but focused our analysis on whether it would be amenable to affordable housing development. It contains a list of properties that might be useful. I don't think we have questions right now about tiny houses, but look forward to seeing your analysis. Our planning staff does not have much bandwidth right now to provide further research, but let me know if you have questions.</p>	<p>that will allow Tiny houses and Tiny house communities to be established in Berkeley for the purpose of housing persons who are homeless.  Financial Implications: See report  Contact: Andrew Wicker, Commission Secretary, 981-5400</p> <p>38b. Tiny houses and Tiny house Communities as Homeless Housing Options<sup>87</sup>  From: City Manager  Recommendation: Review and consider information regarding Tiny house Communities and either:  1. Take no action on the Homeless Commission recommendation. Tiny houses could be created now on private property as a temporary use through the</p>			
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<sup>87</sup> [http://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City\\_Council/2016/10\\_Oct/Documents/2016-10-18\\_Item\\_38b\\_Tiny\\_Homes\\_and\\_Tiny\\_Home\\_Communities.aspx](http://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City_Council/2016/10_Oct/Documents/2016-10-18_Item_38b_Tiny_Homes_and_Tiny_Home_Communities.aspx)

			<p>Administrative Use Permit Process without passing additional enabling ordinances; or</p> <p>2. Refer the item to the City Manager for further research and analysis. The creation of Tiny houses on public or private property for long-term use and/or as habitable dwellings with facilities intended as a homeless program would require modifications to the existing zoning and building codes and additional program requirements to ensure such developments are moving clients out of homelessness.</p> <p>Financial Implications: See report</p> <p>Contact: Paul Buddenhagen, Housing and Community Services, 981-5400</p> <p>21. Referral Response: Analysis of</p>			
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			City-Owned Property for Potential for Housing Development <sup>88</sup> From: City Manager Contact: Paul Buddenhagen, Housing and Community Services, 981-5400			
Dublin	Yes	Dublin has a relatively small homeless population and would be interested in learning more about this strategy, in terms of maintenance, sustainability, ongoing costs, and effectiveness.	The Dublin General Plan would typically allow some varieties of tiny houses depending on the density of the development. All projects would require a Site Development Review Permit, and in some cases a project may need to establish the proper zoning for the development. It may also depend on whether the development could be classified as a group home. Makeshift structures (no. 1) would not be permitted, nor would the use of accessory buildings like “Tuff	There are a number of Building Code issues with some of the tiny houses presented in the survey as the small, portable structures tend not to be suitable for human habitation. Some do not meet minimum occupancy size, several do not have water and utilities, some are not properly attached to a foundation, etc. to meet the minimum Building Code requirements. Link to City of Dublin fees. <sup>89</sup>	At this time we do not have any land identified that could be available for this purpose.	None at this time. Please share the results of the study when completed.

<sup>88</sup> [http://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City\\_Council/2017/02\\_Feb/Documents/2017-02-14\\_Item\\_21\\_Referral\\_Response\\_Analysis.aspx](http://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/City_Council/2017/02_Feb/Documents/2017-02-14_Item_21_Referral_Response_Analysis.aspx)

<sup>89</sup> <http://www.dublin.ca.gov/1330/Fee-Schedule>

			<p>Sheds” (no. 4), as they do not have utilities or kitchen and bathroom facilities, and are not suitable for habitation.</p> <p>Accessory structures (no.2) are permitted in several zoning classifications; a tiny house on wheels (no.3) is perhaps better described as a “mobile home” (regulated by the California Department of Motor Vehicles) and may be permitted through the approval of a Conditional Use Permit in certain zoning districts; and the use of converted shipping containers (no.5) is possible in multi-family zoning districts assuming they are modified to be in compliance with the Building Code.</p>			
Emeryville	Yes	None – Emeryville is not interested in using tiny houses to shelter people	Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are allowed on lots that contain only one legal single unit	The 2016 State Residential Building Code does not recognize dwelling units smaller than efficiency units.	None. We can put more housing in a multi-family structure than	I hope this is helpful. Tiny houses might be an interesting solution to explore in more rural parts of the county.



		<p>experiencing homelessness. We would rather develop multi-unit housing with on-site support for them.</p>	<p>(house) in the RM Medium Residential zone, by right with zoning compliance review, following standards in the ADU article of the code. A draft ADU ordinance, which was continued to November so staff can recommend a lot coverage limit, is attached. It includes the existing code, with proposed changes marked, starting on page 2. We don't know of any legal ADUs smaller than 400 square feet in Emeryville.<sup>90</sup></p>	<p>The Residential code defines efficiency units as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Minimum area. Habitable rooms shall have a floor area of not less than 70 square feet. Exceptions: Kitchens.</li> <li>2. The unit shall have a living room of not less than 220 square feet of floor area. An additional 100 square feet of floor area shall be provided for each occupant of such unit in excess of two.</li> <li>3. The unit shall be provided with a separate closet.</li> <li>4. The unit shall be provided with kitchen sink, cooking appliance and refer. Light and ventilation.</li> <li>5. Other related design criteria for compliance – Heating; ceiling height not less 7 ft.; Egress windows; Smoke detection; Carbon Monoxide detection (gas appliances only); Health and Safety code provisions 17920 – 17920.3. Therefore, our Building Official would not issue a building permit for a dwelling unit smaller than an efficiency unit. There is talk of State legislation addressing smaller units, but it is challenging to build a smaller dwelling unit that complies with the Building</li> </ol>	<p>in tiny houses, so we would not use land for detached houses of any size. Staff has a site in mind that might be proposed for housing and services for formerly homeless people. We would not put tiny houses on a site temporarily because they would need utilities, we would be cleaning up and developing the site, and we would have to evict the occupants before construction starts.</p>	
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<sup>90</sup> See ADU ordinance attachment.

				<p>Code in terms of ventilation, energy efficiency, and other requirements.</p> <p>Land scarcity and cost make such a low-density solution to housing the homeless infeasible here.</p> <p>ADU design requirements are summarized below:</p> <p>Dimensional requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setbacks – side 3 feet, rear 5 feet, front average of adjacent or 10 feet unless garage conversion</li> <li>• Height – 30 feet, step down at angle from 30 feet at 15 feet from rear lot line to 15 feet at 5 feet from rear lot line</li> <li>• Separation – if detached, 6 feet from primary single unit</li> </ul> <p>Design compatible with primary single unit</p> <p>Owner occupy either primary single unit or ADU</p> <p>One ADU per lot</p> <p>ADU may not be sold separately from single unit</p> <p>Comply with building and fire codes</p> <p>Fees:</p> <p>In Planning, the zoning compliance fee for ADUs is \$410.</p> <p>Building permit fees (Building Permit, General Plan Maintenance, Technology, and</p>	
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				Strong Motion Instrument Program as percentages of valuation, plus plan check, energy conservation, electrical, plumbing and mechanical as percentages of permit fee) add up to 1.65675% of construction valuation, plus grading permit (1% of grading project valuation), Certificate of Occupancy \$264, and Cal Building Standards commission fee of about \$1/\$25,000 construction valuation. Please refer to the Planning and Building fee schedule. <sup>91</sup>		
Fremont	Yes	Staff have not specifically discussed tiny houses with Council, but they have been interested in/supportive of innovative approaches to dealing with the housing affordability crisis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In single-family (R-1) and two-family (R-2) zoning districts, tiny houses are permitted by right as a single-family home. There is no minimum size for a single family home in Fremont.</li> <li>• In single-family (R-1) and two-family (R-2) zoning districts, on lots with an existing single-family home, tiny houses are permitted by right as</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent foundation requirement. A permanent foundation is required for any residential structure.</li> <li>• Parking. All new single-family homes, regardless of size, are required to provide at least two covered parking spaces. Two covered parking spaces require a minimum clear area within the garage or carport of 342 square feet (18' x 19'), which may be challenging for a tiny house on a small lot. Covered parking is not required for ADUs.</li> </ul>	The City does not have information on specific available private property parcels that could potentially be used for tiny houses.	Dan Schoenholz, Deputy Community Development Director (email: dschoenholz@fremont.gov Phone: 510-494-4438)

<sup>91</sup> <http://www.emeryville.org/DocumentCenter/Home/View/610>

			<p>an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) if the ADU conforms with the Citywide Design Guidelines and the development standards outlined here.<sup>92</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tiny houses are permitted by right as an ADU in multiple family residential (R-3) zoning districts when there is an existing single-family home on a lot less than 6,000 square feet. Tiny houses are also permitted by right as an ADU in garden apartment (R-G) zoning districts when there is an existing single-family home on a lot less than 7,500 square feet.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land costs. The high cost of acquiring land in the San Francisco Bay Area encourages the construction of larger dwelling units</li> <li>• Development Impact Fees. Development Impact fees are calculated based on number of bedrooms and not square footage of the house. Utility connection fees would also apply.</li> </ul>		
Hayward	Yes	The Hayward City Council acknowledges that there is a significant affordable housing problem	In terms of constructing a tiny house similar to an ADU (structure with permanent foundation), the proposed structures	Neighborhood concerns about parking, traffic impacts. Concerns from neighbors about undesirable behaviors. Concerns about impacts to property value. Concerns about sewer/water and	No city-owned parcels have been identified for this type of development. Some private owners have	1. What lessons learned from mobile home parks can be applied to tiny house developments to maximize successes and minimize challenges?

<sup>92</sup> <https://fremont.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/4073>

		<p>that is contributing to displacement and homelessness in the region. As such, the City Council has tasked staff with researching various options for adding a variety of services, as well as housing options for homeless population including tiny and modular housing to serve this population. The biggest concerns regarding this topic are related to site identification in that such structures need to be close to services, on-site management, and ensuring that the homeless population has access to necessary services such as:</p> <p>a) medical,</p>	<p>would be limited to the following zoning districts: Agricultural (A), Single-family Residential (RS), Residential Natural Preservation (RNP), Multi-Family (RM), and the T3 suburban zoning districts. The construction of ADUs would be limited to those properties where a single-family residence currently exists.</p> <p>Otherwise, the City would likely have to develop a new zoning district or use flexible zoning tools such as a Planned Development (PD) District to allow for smaller lot size and maximize the density required for tiny houses. However, the proposed PD rezones would not be permitted to exceed densities allowed under Hayward 2040 General Plan without</p>	<p>infrastructure connection fees. Concern about long term durability/quality/maintenance of units. Concerns about public safety, fire safety impacts. Concerns about long-term property management.</p> <p>In addition to the concerns listed above, local barriers would also include (dependent on amenities to be provided e.g. bathrooms, kitchens, sinks, etc.) utility connection and park-dedication impact fees which may render some projects cost-prohibitive. Also, potential neighborhood and community impacts from the creation of tiny houses in residential neighborhoods primarily related to parking and congestion.</p> <p>The California Building Code (CBC) may additionally cause potential issues on the legalization of such units depending on the configuration of the proposed tiny houses, their amenities, and whether the structure are proposed to be on wheels or a permanent foundation and/or chassis.</p>	<p>expressed an interest in developing tiny houses, but these are still in conceptual phase.</p>	<p>2. Are there any private or non-profit partnerships that the County is aware of that can assist with the management of tiny house communities through a local jurisdiction partnership?</p> <p>3. What would be the selection process to allow individuals to occupy tiny houses? Who would be the intended user and who will monitor occupancy of such units for homelessness?</p> <p>4. What kinds of services would be or have been offered to residents of tiny houses?</p> <p>5. Who would provide food, payment for utilities such as electricity, water, etc. for the individuals in the homes?</p> <p>6. Would there be any time limits for staying in homes?</p> <p>7. What local jurisdictions have developed and/or</p>
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		<p>mental health and drug treatment, b) job training or life skills training, c) restroom/shower facilities, and d) food and other items necessary for daily living.</p> <p>Additionally, City staff and City Council are working in partnership with a nonprofit affordable housing developer to explore tiny/modular home projects in Hayward. Potential sites have been identified and are being considered for development to house and provide supportive services for the chronically homeless and veterans.</p>	<p>a General Plan Amendment and associated environmental review pursuant to CEQA. A key question would be what configuration constitutes a residential "unit"? A sleeping room with shared kitchen and bathroom facilities versus a dorm or shared quarters which are not subject to density restrictions.</p>		<p>allowed development of this type?</p> <p>8. Are there any community partners (i.e. churches, nonprofits, collectives, etc.) that have partnered with local jurisdictions to offer land for these developments?</p> <p>9. Are deed restricted ADU units under consideration and what would that look like?</p> <p>10. What types of funding sources and/or mechanisms (either private or public) are being considered to develop tiny houses?</p> <p>11. Given that "tiny houses" means a variety of different things to different people -- what type of housing (container, modular, micro-units, etc.) have been successful in other jurisdictions?</p> <p>12. How can ADA accessibility and the needs of the growing senior/disabled population be addressed?</p>
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Livermore	No					
Newark	No					
Oakland	No					
Piedmont	No					
Pleasanton	Yes	<p>“Tiny houses” are not in Pleasanton’s radar at all.</p> <p>Our focus right now is the ADU and junior ADU zoning code updates that we just did. The loosening up our ADU restrictions, we believe, is a much more effective approach to providing more affordable housing in Pleasanton.</p>				
San Leandro	Yes	<p>I’ve cc’d Jeanette Dong, our Recreation and Human Services Director, as she has been the lead on City homeless issues/policy. While City Council is very</p>	<p>From the Planning/Housing side, we have not seen any tiny houses or tiny house developments. Regarding zoning classification, it really depends on what the development</p>	<p>A key local concern will likely come from Building and Fire Department regulations as these departments will want to ensure that the tiny houses, if needing a building permit, will meet health, safety and fire code requirements. Please provide information on design requirements, permit fees, etc.</p>	<p>It is hard for us to gauge what sites can be used for tiny houses because it depends on the need or proposal (e.g., single ADU, multiple tiny</p>	<p>Some questions to consider include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you looking at private, public and/or public/private models for tiny house development?</li> </ul>

		sensitive to the homeless needs in the City, I as Planning/Housing staff have not heard any Council direction to date to explore tiny houses.	proposal and the site location are. For instance we updated our accessory dwelling unit regulations in the Zoning Code (see Article 5 Residential Districts) to make the permitting of ADUs much more streamlined per State law. So if a tiny house was being proposed as an ADU on a single family parcel it would likely have a smooth approval process. If a proposal came in to development 30 tiny houses on a large lot or multiple lots, that could trigger discretionary approval such as a CUP, Planned Development and/or Site Plan Review.	Design criteria really depends on what the tiny house development proposal is and the location (and zoning for that location). Link to current City Planning fees <sup>93</sup> and Building fees <sup>94</sup> provided in footnotes.	houses, etc.). City owned land is limited so there is no City property I can think of which would be potential development site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the County looking at tiny houses as rental and/or ownership types?</li> <li>• Who will own the land under the tiny houses?</li> <li>• Who are the target populations, if any, for tiny houses?</li> </ul>
Unincorporated Alameda County	Yes	There is no interest from Unincorporated Alameda County in tiny houses.				
Union City	Yes	Currently, Union City does not				

<sup>93</sup> <http://www.sanleandro.org/depts/cd/plan/planfff/default.asp>

<sup>94</sup> <http://www.sanleandro.org/depts/cd/bldg/bldgfff.asp>



		have any zoning that would accommodate tiny houses unless the tiny house met all of our accessory dwelling unit requirements.				
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