



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
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DATE: April 20, 2017

TO: City of Saint Paul Mayor and Council Members

FROM: Ricardo Cervantes-Director of the Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI)

SUBJECT: Temporary Family Health Care Dwelling Units

Governor Dayton signed a bill into law last year that requires local governments to allow a “mobile residential dwelling” to be used as Temporary Family Health Care Dwellings Units (TFHCDU) on residential properties with an existing principal dwelling, unless the city chooses to ‘opt-out’ of this requirement. These TFHCDU may include ‘tiny houses’, small recreational vehicles (<300 ft² in size) and similar types of dwellings that may be used to house on-site caregivers or as transitional housing for seniors. This new law took effect September 1, 2016 unless local jurisdictions elected to ‘opt-out’ by an ordinance amendment.

The Department of Planning and Economic Development, Saint Paul Fire Department, and the Department of Safety and Inspections does not support the use of Temporary Family Health Care Dwellings for a number of reasons, including:

1. Temporary Family Health Care Dwelling Units do not meet the requirements of the Minnesota State Building Code. Recreational vehicles are typically not constructed to Minnesota State Building Code standards.
2. Temporary Family Health Care Dwelling Units do not meet the requirements of Chapter 34 of the Saint Paul Legislative Code, which requires that all dwelling units meet the requirements of the state plumbing and mechanical codes.
3. Temporary Family Health Care Dwelling Units may pose a significant fire risk to the occupants of these structures as they are likely to be constructed from materials and by methods that allow for more rapid flame spread than in traditional construction.
4. Temporary structures, such as Temporary Family Health Care Dwelling units, may pose a significant fire hazard to adjacent, permanent, structures located on the same property. These units could facilitate fire spread from building to building within the city.
5. Policy 2.18 in the Housing Chapter of the City of Saint Paul’s Comprehensive Plan states that the city should encourage “flexibility for the re-use and/or physical adaption of existing single-family and multi-family buildings for senior housing. Possibilities include but are not limited to the conversion of large structures to one-level condos and/or rental units, and the use of shared housing models in existing homes.” The Comprehensive Plan clearly supports the re-use of existing residential dwelling units within the City of Saint Paul. Temporary Family Health Care Dwelling Units are not existing dwelling units in the city.

Additional reasons why TFHCDU should not be allowed within the city are included in the attached Temporary Family Health Care Dwelling Unit study prepared for the Saint Paul City Council.

The Saint Paul City Council adopted an interim ordinance last fall, temporarily prohibiting TFHCD within the city. The attached language serves as the final ordinance prohibiting these types of dwellings within Saint Paul.

For additional questions, please contact me at 651-266-9101 or Deputy Director Travis Bistodeau at 651-266-1922.