

City of Atlanta Tiny House Feasibility Study

In partnership with Tiny House Atlanta, Ryan Taylor Architects, LLC, and the American Tiny House Association



Project Overview

Tiny houses can address the changing needs of households in Atlanta, Georgia, by providing a more affordable and efficient housing stock while simultaneously making the region more competitive in attracting talent and an increasingly mobile workforce. The purpose of the study was to explain the Tiny House Movement in relation to regulatory changes, potential incentives and protections.

In 2016, the City of Atlanta contracted Southface for a comprehensive study of financial feasibility and local and state regulations pertaining to tiny homes. Southface partnered with Tiny House Atlanta, Ryan Taylor Architects, LLC, and the American Tiny House Association to create this study pertaining to tiny houses, tiny houses on wheels, tiny house communities, and micro housing. In this study, Southface held meetings and stakeholder interviews throughout the project timeline to understand the current housing climate.



Project Highlights:

Stakeholder Engagement

- Engaged City Hall department representatives and zoning and building code experts
- Interviewed national and local leaders in tiny house best practices, local developers and potential manufacturers in Georgia

Feasibility of Various Forms of Tiny Houses

Tiny Houses: Feasibility of a tiny house on an existing parcel in a single family zoning district.

- In each of the neighborhoods studied, the final equity position and lot-to-value ratios make a proposed tiny house project infeasible.

Tiny House on Wheels: Analysis of zoning regulations regarding this particular sub type.

- Being that a tiny house on wheels is effectively a mobile home, this study finds their use within the city infeasible, in that there is only one mobile home park in the city.

Micro Housing: Examination of zoning regulations applicable to the multifamily form of tiny houses.

- The study determined that feasibility in this case depends on whether the delivered cost of the unit is able to provide an attractive return on investment for the developer.

Tiny House Communities: Entitlement, regulation and development of tiny house communities.

- Feasibility of a community of tiny houses is determined by whether the final product is able to provide an attractive return on investment for the developer, since land costs can be prohibitive.

Outcomes and Recommendations

Study results indicated it is not financially feasible to build tiny homes on single family lots in Atlanta under current market conditions. Even so, Southface identified small amendments to local zoning and state building codes that would greatly reduce barriers to constructing legal accessory dwelling units and supplementing missing middle housing stock within the city.