

County Approves Short-Term Rental Ordinance

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The Board of Commissioners addressed community concerns about short-term rentals by adopting an ordinance formally recognizing them as an approved use in [16 zones](#) in unincorporated Clatsop County. The Board also directed staff to develop a process and timeline for evaluating a potential cap on the number of short-term rental units permitted in various areas of unincorporated Clatsop County.

“We’ve spent time listening to various concerns and perspectives and we thank everyone for their involvement. We’re now entering the next phase of evaluating where and how caps on short-term rentals might be applied in certain zones,” said Clatsop County Board of Commissioners Chair Mark Kujala.

Short-term vacation rentals – defined as allowing no more than 30 days per stay – have been licensed for many years throughout the county.

In April, commissioners approved revisions to the STR permit program that shortened the permit period from five to two years, created a tiered complaint response and penalty system and made other revisions.

In 2018 the Board approved an ordinance setting operating standards for short-term rentals outside of Arch Cape, covering health and safety standards, occupancy limits, parking rules and other areas, but did not amend the zoning code to identify where short-term rentals could be located.

In 2020 County Code Compliance staff began hosting quarterly public town hall meetings to address concerns and complaints about short-term rentals. Based on input from the meetings, county staff began work on proposed revisions to the STR operating standards, and the Board hosted three town halls in late 2021 and early 2022 to gather more input. Following further discussion, the Board directed staff to draft ordinances updating operating standards and amending the county Land and Water Development and Use Code to list STRs in most residential and commercial zones.

As part of the review process, the Board also voted in August 2021 to enact a moratorium on new STR licenses. The moratorium has been extended twice and is currently in place until Aug. 26, 2022. As the Board considers the imposition of caps, the Board may choose to further

extend the moratorium. Staff will present the proposed timeline and process at a work session on Wednesday, August 3.

Owners and operators of short-term rentals in the unincorporated county are required to obtain permits through a multi-step process that includes reviews and sign-offs by county Planning and Public Health offices and in-person site inspections by Building Codes staff.

STR operators must also pay the county's transient room tax.