

Larimer County Short-term Rental Regulations Summary of Community Questionnaire Feedback

Community Questionnaire Details

The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather general feedback and ideas early in the Short-term Rental regulations update process. The public was able to self-select to participate in either/or or both questionnaire forms, and people could participate multiple times. Therefore, the summary of feedback is presented in a more thematic manner rather than quantitatively. Information about the project and a link to the questionnaire was included on the Planning Department webpage. In addition, the County created a media release about the project which was spotlighted on the County website and the County's social media accounts. County staff sent a link to the questionnaire to 10 groups in early July, including but not limited to multiple Chamber of Commerce, City/Town Planning Directors, Advisory Committees, property owners on the Estes Valley STR waitlist, and 7 previously approved and 3 recently denied STR applicants and neighboring properties from across the County. Other groups also widely distributed it among their members to encourage participation. This is one part of the overall community engagement process and input for the project. The questionnaires were available to the Community on the project webpage (<https://www.larimer.gov/planning/short-term-rentals>) from July 6, 2022 – August 28, 2022.

Two Questionnaires (participants could self-select and complete one or both):

- Detailed Questionnaire – 27 total questions, includes 4 demographic questions
- General Questionnaire – 5 total questions

Participant Feedback – General Questionnaire

Total participants: 588 participants. This questionnaire did not include any demographic questions.

Each question is provided below followed by a brief summary of the feedback received in a box.

Question #1 - Do you think short-term rentals are beneficial or not in Larimer County?

Summary of Responses to Question #1: Overall, about half of participants indicated that they believe STRs are beneficial while the other half expressed that they believe STRs are not beneficial.

Question #2 – Do you think Larimer County is regulating and reviewing short-term rentals at the right level?

- Need less regulation and review countywide
- Need more regulation and review countywide
- About the right level of regulation and review countywide

- Need less regulation and review in the Estes Valley
- Need more regulation and review in the Estes Valley
- About the right level of regulation and review in the Estes Valley
- I do not know
- Other comments

Summary of Responses to Question #2: Of those participants who responded to the questions about “Countywide”, most participants think there is a need for less regulation and review.

Of those participants who responded about “the Estes Valley,” most participants think that more regulation and review may be necessary.

Question #3 - Do you have concerns with short-term rental properties? If so, please rank the following options in order of most concern to least concern: emergency access/response, incompatibility with neighborhood, degradation of neighborhood character, other, noise wildfire, loss of work force housing, traffic, parking, in conflict with HOA and/or covenants, wear and tear on roads, neighborhood safety, lack of available water, trespassing, and impact to property value.

Summary of Responses to Question #3: The following options are ranked in order of most concern to least concern based on participant response –

- incompatibility with neighborhood,
- noise,
- degradation of neighborhood character,
- wildfire,
- neighborhood safety,
- impact to property value,
- loss of work force housing,
- trespassing,
- wear and tear on roads,
- traffic,
- parking,
- in conflict with HOA and/or covenants,
- emergency access/response, and
- lack of availability, other.

Question #4 - As a community member of Larimer County, have short-term rentals affected you and/or your daily life?

Summary of Responses to Question #4: About half of participants indicated that they believe STRs have had a positive impact on their daily life while the other half expressed that they believe STRs have had a negative impact.

Those who expressed a positive impact highlighted benefits to the economy and tourism. Additionally, many participants expressed that having an STR allows them the ability to maintain ownership of a family home (generational homes) and/or second homes when they otherwise would not be able to. Many expressed that neighboring STRs have seldom created issues.

Those who expressed a negative impact indicated they have been directly impacted by a neighboring STR(s) including noise, trespassing, and poor management of the properties by owners and/or property management. Also, participants indicated that they do not feel as safe in their neighborhoods with the continuous change in house occupants and believe STRs lead to the loss of the sense of community.

Question #5 - Do you have other general comments about short-term rentals in Larimer County, or in the Estes Valley in particular, and how Larimer County should address them?

Summary of Response to Question #5:

- Enforcement of the regulations needs to be improved. If a property is out of compliance, penalties need to be significant.
- Current process is far too complicated and time consuming.
- STRs should not be allowed in residential areas.
- STRs should only be allowed where HOAs permit them.
- A list of approved STRs should be published by the County so that locals/neighbor know where they are located.
- Receiving a notice from the County that an STR was approved is helpful.
- The density of STRs needs to be controlled. Some neighborhoods have too many.
- STRs should not be blamed for the lack of affordable or work force housing.
- The Town of Estes Park and the County should create regulations that are consistent with one another.
- The County should monitor permit use, creating a use-it or lose-it policy.
- Neighbors should not be responsible for policing neighboring STRs.
- Eliminate STRs altogether.
- There are not enough hotels or motels in the Estes Valley to accommodate tourist. STRs are beneficial.

- STRs should not be regulated.
- Regulations should be based on the type of STR and the size of the property.
- Only approve STRs that can be policed by the County without putting neighbors at risk for reporting issues.
- Neighborhoods should vote on whether to allow or not allow STRs.
- STRs are a business and therefore should be taxed as a business. Additionally, they should only be allowed in accommodation or commercial zoning districts.
- If STRs are managed well, they create no issues.
- Over regulating STRs will only hurt the economy and tourist industries.

Summary of Participant Feedback – Detailed Questionnaire

Total participants: 275 participants completed the longer questionnaire

In an early report of the questionnaire, the majority of participants reported that they were owners of short-term rentals, and by final outcome, a slight majority of participants indicated that they do not own a Short-term Rental (STR). A large percentage of the participants indicated that they were aware that they lived near a STR. Feedback indicates that a large percentage of those who participated in the questionnaire are located in or near Estes Park. Other participants were located in or near Fort Collins, Loveland, Red Feather Lakes, Berthoud, LaPorte, Wellington, Windsor, and Johnstown.

Each question and range of responses is provided below followed by a brief summary of the feedback received in a box.

Question #1.1 – The Larimer County zone districts (excluding the Estes Valley) where STRs are currently allowed should (select one):

- Remain unchanged, allowing STRs in the following zoning districts: FO, A, RR-1, RR-2, O, IR, UR-1, UR-2, UR-3, MU-N, MU-C, CD, and AP
- Be modified to allow STRs in only Urban character area zoning districts: UR-1, UR-2, UR-3, MU-N, MU-C, CD, and AP
- Be modified to allow STRs in only Urban and Mixed Center character area zoning districts: UR-1, UR-2, UR-3, MU-N, MU-C, CD, and AP, and IR
- Be modified to allow STRs in only Rural and Conservation and Agricultural character area zoning districts: RR-1, RR-2, O, FO, and A
- Be modified to allow STRs in only Conservation and Agricultural, Urban, and Mixed Center character area zoning districts, removing the use from Rural character area zoning districts: FO, A, IR, UR-1, UR-2, UR-3, MU-N, MU-C, CD, and AP
- I do not know
- Neutral
- Other suggestions

Question #1.2 - The allowed zoning districts for the Estes Valley should (select one):

- Remain unchanged, allowing STRs in the following zoning districts: EV RE-1, RE, E-1, E, R, RM, EV A, and EV A-1
- Be modified to allow STRs in only the Accommodation zoning districts EV A and EV A-1
- Be modified to allow STRs in only the Accommodation and Estes Valley Estate zoning districts: EV A, EV A-1, EV E and EV E-1
- Be modified to allow STRs in only the Accommodation and Estes Valley Rural Estate zoning districts: EV A, EV A-1, EV RE, and EV RE-1
- Be modified to allow STRs in only the Accommodation and Estes Valley Residential zoning districts: EV A, EV A-1, and EV R

- Be modified to allow STRs in only the Accommodation and Estes Valley Multi-family Residential zoning districts: EV A, EV A-1, and EV RM
- I do not know
- Neutral
- Other suggestions

Summary of Responses to Questions #1.1 and 1.2: Most participants would like to see the zoning districts where STRs are currently allowed, both Countywide and in the Estes Valley, remain unchanged rather than modifying the zoning districts.

Summary of 'Other Suggestions' to Questions #1.1 and 1.2:

- STRs should not be allowed in residential zoning districts.
- If lodging is needed, build more hotels/motels in the appropriate zoning districts. Do not allow STRs.
- The density of STRs in residential areas is an issue.

Question #2.1 – For areas located outside of Estes Valley, the County should (select one):

- Create a cap or limit on the number of allowed STRs based on zoning district. For example, the Rural zoning districts (O, RR, and RR-1) could have a different cap than Urban zone districts (includes UR-1, MR, CC, and CD).
- Create a cap on the number of allowed STRs based on neighborhood. For example, a neighborhood located close to City limits (urban area) could have a different cap or total percentage allowed than a neighborhood located in the mountains (rural area).
- Create a cap on the number of allowed STRs based on geographic area. For example, a highway corridor (Hwy 34, Hwy 14) could have a different cap than mountain communities (Red Feather Lakes, Glen Haven).
- Do not cap or limit the number of allowed STRs within the County.
- Other suggestions

Summary of Responses to Question #2.1: More participants would like to see the development of a cap(s), for areas located outside of the Estes Valley, based upon either neighborhood or zoning district rather than basing the cap on geographic area.

Summary of 'Other Suggestions' to Questions #2.1:

- The cap should be applied to residential zoning districts only and not to other zoning district.
- The number of approved STRs per neighborhood should be very low, such as 1-2%.

Question #2.2 – The Estes Valley STR cap in residentially zoned districts, currently at 266 units, should (select one):

- Remain unchanged (stay at 266 units)
- Be reduced (less than 266 units)
- Be increased (greater than 266 units)
- Other suggestions

Summary of responses to Question #2.2: Overall, participants support the existing cap in the Estes Valley. An equal number of participants would like to see the County either keep the cap at the current maximum number of units (266 units) or increase the number so that it is greater than 266 units.

Question #2.3 - Should the County further manage the density or concentration of Short-term Rentals in the Estes Valley by neighborhood or geographic area? For instance, Neighborhood #1 may have a STR limit of 10 units or 20%, Neighborhood #2 may have a different STR limit of 15 units or 30%, while Neighborhood #3 may have a different STR limit of 25 units or 50%, so on and so forth.

- Yes, limit it to a percentage or total number by neighborhood or geographic area.
- No, do not limit it to a percentage or total number by neighborhood or geographic area
 - keep as is.
- I do not know.
- Other suggestions

Summary of responses to Question #2.3: Just over half of the participants do not want to see the County further manage the density or concentration of STRs in the Estes Valley by neighborhood or geographic area.

Question #3.1 - Should the County consider allowing more than one STR on properties zoned for accommodations – EV A – Estes Valley Accommodation/Highway Corridor and EV A-1 Estes Valley Accommodation/Low Intensity?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know
- Neutral
- Other suggestions

Question #3.2 - Should the County consider allowing more than one STR on properties zoned commercial – MU-C – Mixed-use Commercial and CD – Commercial Destination countywide?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know
- Neutral

- Other suggestions

Summary of responses to Questions #3.1 and 3.2: About half of the participants would like to see an allowance for more than one STR on properties zoned for accommodations (in the Estes Valley) and zoned for commercial (Countywide) rather than allowing only one STR on those properties.

Question #4.1 - Should the County modify the approval process (select one):

- Continue Administrative review for both Small (10 or fewer guests) and Large (11 or more guests) Short-term Rentals.
- Modify review so that a more stringent approval process applies for Large Short-term Rentals (11 or more guests) only.
- Have a simpler review process for Small Short-term Rentals (10 or fewer guests), but remain unchanged for Large Short-term Rentals (11 or more guests).
- Other process review suggestions.

Summary of responses to Question #4.1: Most participants would like to see a simpler review process for Small STRs but remain unchanged for Large STRs rather than keeping the review process the same or making the review process more stringent.

Summary of 'Other Suggestions' to Questions #4.1:

- The County should require safety standards for STRs, but the current approval process takes too long. The process is stringent and unnecessary.
- The impact to neighborhoods is not given enough consideration or weight in the approval process. Concerns around fire, noise, firearms, trespass, traffic, human-wildlife interactions, light pollution, and parking issues.
- Approved STRs should be required to go through an annual review. If the STR is not in conformance, the approval should be revoked.

Question #4.2 - Should the County consider a less stringent approval process for properties located in the Estes Valley and zoned Accommodation (EV A or EV A-1)? (select one)

- Yes, simpler review for both EV A - Estes Valley Accommodations/Highway Corridor and EV A-1 - Estes Valley Accommodations/Low Intensity
- Yes, simpler review for only EV A - Estes Valley Accommodations/Highway Corridor
- Yes, simpler review for only EV A-1 - Estes Valley Accommodations/Low Intensity
- No, the current approval process should continue to apply to both EV A - Estes Valley Accommodations/Highway Corridor and EV A-1 - Estes Valley Accommodations/Low Intensity
- I do not know

- Other suggestions

Summary of responses to Question #4.2: An equal number of participants would like to see either the current approval process be continued or a simpler review process for both EV A – Estes Valley Accommodations/Highway Corridor and EV A-1 – Estes Valley Accommodations/Low Intensity be implemented.

Question #5.1 - Retaining affordable housing, long-term rental units, and work-force housing should be considered when evaluating STR regulations and policies?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know
- Neutral
- Other suggestions

If selected 'Yes' to the question above, additional questions provided:

In order to retain long-term rental options as well as work-force housing options, the County should consider an incentive program?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know
- Neutral
- Other suggestions

In order to retain long-term rental options as well as work-force housing options, the County should consider charging impact fees for all STR properties?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know
- Neutral
- Other suggestions

Summary of responses to Question #5.1: An equal number of participants both believe and do not believe that retaining affordable housing, long-term rental units, and work-force housing should be considered when evaluating STR regulations and policies.

For those participants that believe housing should be considered, more participants would like the County to consider an incentive program and/or consider charging impact fees for all STR properties.

Summary of 'Other Suggestions' to Questions #5.1:

- Many STR properties in Estes Valley would never be affordable or workforce housing because they would cost too much to rent as a long-term rental.
- STR properties are not typically compatible with long term renting as many owners rent them to help make them affordable while also using the home themselves. If the property were a long-term rental, the owners could not use the home themselves when they want.
- Work force housing issues will not be resolved until STRs are taxed and regulated as they should be.

Question #5.2 – The County should consider a lodging tax?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know
- Neutral
- Other suggestions

Summary of responses to Question #5.2: A majority of participants would prefer if the County did not consider a lodging tax.

Summary of 'Other Suggestions' to Questions #5.2:

- STR properties should pay a sales tax like other businesses.
- STR properties should pay a lodging tax and/or fees to offset the impact they have to local infrastructure. The lodging tax or fees could be used towards affordable housing programs.
- STRs should be treated like hotels and motels. STRs should be taxed as a lodging facility.

Question #5.3 – A Short-term Rental property should pay a different property tax than a residential property?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know
- Neutral
- Other suggestions

Summary of responses to Question #5.3: About two-thirds of participants would prefer if the County did not consider taxing an STR property differently than a residential property.

Summary of 'Other Suggestions' to Questions #5.3:

- STR properties should only be taxed differently if it is used as a STR for more than half the year.

Question #6.1 - In order to manage the conversion of long-term rentals and/or housing to short-term rentals, should the County require that a property be owned by the same owner for a minimum length of time before the property can be converted to a STR?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know
- Neutral
- Other suggestions

Summary of responses to Question #6.1: Slight majority of participants would rather not see the County create a limit or minimum to the length of time an owner(s) must own a property before it can be converted to a STR.

Question #6.2 - If a property containing an approved STR is sold to a new owner(s) (select one):

- The previous approval for the STR use should remain valid and no actions are required by a new owner if the property is transferred to a new property owner(s)
- The previous approval for the STR use should automatically expire and the new owner(s) should be required to go through a new approval process if they hope to retain the STR use. The approval should be non-transferable.
- The previous approval for the STR use should remain valid, but the new owner(s) should be required to re-register and pay a new owner fee. The approval should remain transferable with conditions.
- I do not know.
- Neutral
- Other suggestions

Summary of responses to Question #6.2: Overall, more participants would like to see some restriction on the transferability of STR approvals. Participants would like to see either the approval expire requiring the new owner(s) to go through a new approval process or the approval remain valid, but the new owner(s) be required to re-register and pay a new owner fee.

Summary of 'Other Suggestions' to Questions #6.2:

- Existing STRs should be grandfathered in.
- STR approvals should not be transferable. Transferability only benefits the seller as they are able to ask for more money for the house.

Question #7.1 - An approved Short-term Rental should be (select one):

- Unrestricted in the number of days per year it can be rented to transient guests.
- Restricted to a specific number of days per year it can be rented to transient guests.

- I do not know.
- Neutral
- Other suggestions

If selected 'Yes' to the question above, additional question provided:

An approved Short-term Rental should not be rented for more than (select one):

- 90 days per year (~3 months)
- 180 days per year (~6 months)
- 270 days a year (~9 months)
- I do not know
- Neutral
- Other suggestions

Question #7.2 - The County should provide multiple types of STR licenses based on the number of nights leased per year, with each option subject to a different approval process? (select one)

- Yes
- No
- I do not know
- Neutral
- Other suggestions

Summary Question #7.1 and 7.2: About two-thirds of participants would prefer that a STR be unrestricted in the number of days per year it can be rented to transient guests rather than restricting STR rentals to a specific number of days per year; therefore, most participants believe multiple types of STR licenses based on the number of nights leased per year is not beneficial.

Of the small quantity of participants that responded that they would prefer a STR be restricted in the number of days per year, they would like to see STRs restricted to 90 days per year.

Question #8.1 - To manage safety and/or compatibility concerns, the County should require an approval process for a 'Mid-term Rental' use?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know
- Neutral
- Other suggestions

Question #8.2 - A 'Mid-Term Rental' should be addressed in the Larimer County Land Use Code and should be defined as "a dwelling rented to transient guests for ___ consecutive days, when not occupied by the owner/renter" (select one):

- 31 - 90 days
- 31 - 180 days
- 90 - 180 days
- I do not know
- Neutral
- Other suggestions

Summary of responses to Questions #8.1 and 8.2: About two-thirds of participants believe it would not be beneficial to create a new use type or require an approval process for a 'Mid-term Rental'.

Summary of 'Other Suggestions' to Questions #8.1 and 8.2:

- Creating a 'Mid-term Rental' use would make workforce housing even more limited. Many seasonal workers only rent for 30-180 days or for a season.
- If mid-term rentals are regulated, then long-term rentals should be regulated.
- Regulating mid-term rentals could create issues for long-term rentals that go month-to-month at the end of the lease.

Question #9.1 - If you would like to provide comments or suggestions regarding B&B regulations, please do so in the text box below.

Summary of responses to Question #9.1:

- Many participants indicated that they believe a B&B use should not be allowed in residential zoning districts.
- A number of participants believe the approval process for a B&B use should be less stringent than a STR because the property owner(s) are present on site with the guests while other participants indicated that a B&B use should be treated the same as a STR.
- Participants expressed concern that property owners may be seeking approval for a B&B use as a way to skirt the system. Participants are concerned that although the property owners may be on site with the guests occasionally, they are not always on site.
- Some participants suggested the County develop a way to periodically verify that the property owner is on site. If the owner is not on site, stiff penalties should be enforced.
- Some participants indicated that they would prefer or encourage a B&B use over a STR use.

Final Question -

Other suggestions or comments regarding Short-term Rentals:

- Many retirees rely on having a STR to supplement their income.
- STR regulations penalize families who are trying to afford their generational homes.
- The County and Town of Estes Park have gone overboard on STR regulations.
- The Estes Valley STR regulations should be the same as the regulations within the Town of Estes Park.
- STRs bring revenue into the County. They are an integral part of the economy.
- STR destroy the community and the fabric of a neighborhood. The County needs to enforce strict regulations. They are a nuisance to the neighbors.
- The County should not allow self-managed properties; all STR properties should be managed by a professional management company.
- Response time by management should be within 15 minutes.
- Grounds maintenance should be required for all STRs.
- There is currently no accountability when something goes wrong at a STR property. The County should hold the property owner and/or guests accountable. The current regulations need to be better enforced.
- Lack of enforcement pits residents against STR guests and owners.
- A homeowner who owns one STR should not be treated the same as someone who owns multiple STR properties. A single homeowner should not be treated the same as a rental corporation.
- The County should not allow people to own or operate more than one STR in the County unless the properties are zoned Accommodations or Commercial.
- Owners should be required to live in the area. STRs will drive out local residents.