

**Larimer County Short-term Rental Regulations  
Summary of Estes Valley Community Open House  
August 15, 2022  
6:00pm – 7:30pm, 660 Community Dr., Estes Park**

**Attendance**

- County Team: Lesli Ellis (Community Development Director), Matt Lafferty (Principal Planner), Tawn Hillenbrand (Senior Planner), Don Threewitt (Planning Manager), Amy White (Code Compliance Supervisor), Alan Kee (Code Compliance Inspector), Shalana Lysaght (Business Operations Supervisor), Teresa Mollendor (Community Information Resource Technician), Victoria McKennan (Planner II), Sam Lasher (Planner I), and Tatum Hastings (Planner I)
- Public Attendance – 43 signed in

**Short-term Rental Presentation**

The County Planning Team provided a brief presentation on Short-term Rentals (STRs) which included background information on existing STR regulations and ideas on what is being considered with the proposed STR regulations update.

The background information contained in the presentation included:

- Larimer County Land Use definitions for Short-term Rentals, Bed & Breakfasts, and Resort Lodge/Cottage uses;
- Existing zoning districts that allow STRs both Countywide and in the Estes Valley;
- The current approval process for STRs;
- Enforcement Ordinance; and
- Why the County is evaluating the effectiveness of the existing regulations

Topics or ideas under consideration included in the presentation:

- Should the County modify where STRs are allowed and at what intensity?
- Should the County modify the review process for certain types of STRs?
- Should the County change the standards for health, safety, and welfare based on how the STR is used?

The STR presentation also touched upon the regulations update process, including a process timeline, link to the project website (<https://www.larimer.gov/planning/short-term-rentals>), and a link to the Community Questionnaire on the webpage.

The Planning Team briefly touched upon the Community Questionnaire. Preliminary feedback from the questionnaire suggests that the community may support:

- continuing some level of regulations

- modifying the approval process
- creating a cap on the number of approved STRs countywide (outside of the Estes Valley)
- Allowing more than one STR on commercially zoned properties or properties zoned Accommodations (in the Estes Valley)
- Considering some limitation to the transferability of a STR approval to a new property owner

### **Participant Feedback and Questions**

Following the brief presentation on STRs, the meeting participants were encouraged to visit six (6) different tables or stations, each containing a specific topic of discussion. A county team member was present at each station to address questions and receive community feedback. The participants could move from each station at their leisure and were encouraged to post their written comments to each discussion board. Some of the participants expressed interest in continuing the current approach while others had questions and feedback about compliance, and standards, and would like to see the County revise the standards.

A summary of the specific comments received is provided below:

- Board 1: Welcome and Overview –
  - STRs create revenue, through tourism, create jobs, and provide options for visitors. STRs contribute to Estes Park and the Estes Valley.
- Board 2: All About STRs in Larimer County –
  - The ability to rent one’s property as a STR is within property owner rights. Regulations take away those rights, which is unconstitutional.
  - Bed & Breakfasts are no different than a STR and should be regulated the same.
  - STRs should be taxed as a commercial property.
  - Complaint system is biased to the individual making the complaint. The complaint system is flawed. Most issues are perceived issues.
  - STRs create safety concerns such as speeding in residential neighborhoods and unsafe interactions with wildlife.
  - The decision criteria seem to favor business rights over families who bought homes in neighborhoods.
  - The County should not approve any new STRs.
  - STRs should be allowed in commercial zoning districts only.
  - STRs are the downfall of the community.
- Board 3: Should the County Modify Where STRs Are Allowed and At What Intensity? –
  - Regulations and review should be minimal in the EV A (Estes Valley Accommodations) zoning district.
  - STR license should be transferred to new owners.
  - The zone districts that currently allow STRs should remain the same; no modifications.

- The density of STRs should be limited.
  - Density should be considered neighborhood by neighborhood. STRs appear to work well when the owner/management are onsite.
  - A cap on the total number of approved STRs should be applied countywide, but the cap should be reviewed annually.
  - Approved STRs should be allowed to continue only if the property owner is abiding by the regulations.
  - There should be no limit on how many STRs are located in a neighborhood.
  - The Estes Valley cap should remain while license should not be transferable.
  - Each STR should be evaluated on its own merits.
  - Each neighborhood should be provided a list of STRs in their area.
  - There should be no cap on the number of approved STRs in the Estes Valley because Estes Park is a vacation town and should accommodate visitors.
  - If transferability regulations are adopted, existing STRs should be grandfathered in.
- Board 4: Should the County Modify the Review Process for Certain Types of STRs (e.g. Large STR, Small STR, zone district, etc.)? –
  - STR license should not be transferable.
  - The County should require a public hearing for Large STRs if they are located in residential zoning districts.
  - The County should regulate how property owners use their license or if they are using their license. There should be a use-it or lose-it policy.
  - If requirements are not met, the application fee should be required again in order to move forward in the process.
  - Method for getting feedback from neighbors seem appropriate.
  - The threshold to transfer from an administrative approval to Commissioner approval seems subjective.
  - Long-term rentals pose more of a safety issue than STRs.
  - Participant supports transferability limits, but the County should make an exception when the property is passed from one family member to another.
  - The County should limit review in commercial zoning districts.
  - Neighbor “concerns” about potential negative issues associated with STRs should not be sufficient to deny an application.
- Board 5: Should the County Change the Standards for Health, Safety, and Welfare Based on How the STR is Used? –
  - STRs are safer than long-term rentals (noted by two participants).
  - Safety regulations for STRs are about right.
  - STRs should not be allowed in the Prospect Mountain Road area, which leads to the town water supply. This creates a safety concern.
  - County should ensure that private roads are able to support fire equipment.
  - County should provide the required property boundary map to applicants.

- A hired property management company is “hired help” which implies a business. A business use should not be allowed in residential areas.
- The County should notify all members in a neighborhood of proposed/approved STRs and B&Bs.
- The regulation that requires property owners to identify property boundaries is logical. Larger properties should define a smaller area within the larger boundary for guests.
- The County should create dark sky lighting regulations for STRs countywide.
- There should be a plan for notifying renters of fire, flood, and/or other emergencies.
- Owners and/or property managers should be required to post current fire restrictions in each STR.
- Long-term rentals pose safety issues as well and should be licensed.
- Board 6: What Are Some Other Thoughts the County Should Consider? –
  - STR should be taxed at a higher rate.
  - STR license should not be transferable (noted by two participants). This would be more fair to those property owners on the waitlist. Additionally, this could eliminate those property owners who may not be using their license.
  - The County should create a process to address those property owners that do not use their STR license. STR license should be revoked if they are not used for a specific period of time.
  - If a STR license is not transferable, the County should grandfather in existing STRs (noted by three participants).
  - STRs provide revenue. Law abiding STR owners are not the problem.
  - Many complaints made by neighbors are on unlicensed STRs and not actually on those that have been approved by the County.
  - The County should not limit the number of days a year a STR can be rented.
  - Fort Collins doesn’t appear to have as big of a problem with STRs as the Estes Valley.
  - The County needs to provide the data to support the claim that STRs impact affordable housing.
  - STRs should not be taxed differently than residential properties.
  - There is no rational reason to limit transferability.
  - Long-term rental properties should be given a tax break.
  - The definition for STRs should be changed to more than 30 days.
  - STRs are no different from a home occupation use such as home childcare.
  - An exception should be made to non-transferability when the transfer of the property is family to family.
  - The County should make it clear to property owners that HOA regulations regarding STRs supersede County regulations.
  - Long-term rentals should be regulated.

- Board 7: All About the STR Regulations Update –
  - The County should look at long-term rentals.
  - New regulations should not impact existing STRs.