

**Larimer County Short-term Rental Regulations
Public Draft #2 and Amended Enforcement Ordinance
Summary of Countywide Open House Webinar
January 26, 2023
6:00pm – 7:30pm, on Zoom**

Attendance

- County Team: Lesli Ellis (Community Development Director), Matt Lafferty (Principal Planner), Tawn Hillenbrand (Senior Planner), and Amy White (Code Compliance Supervisor)
- Community and STR Owner Attendance – 70 people

Short-term Rental Draft Regulations Presentation

The County Planning Team provided a brief presentation on the Short-term Rental (STR) regulations update Public Review Draft #2 of suggested revisions and the *Amended Ordinance of Implementation and Enforcement of the Short-term Rental Regulations*. The presentation included the current project timeline. Additionally, the team presented the draft regulations and amended enforcement ordinance documents. Focusing on unincorporated Larimer County outside of the Estes Valley, the team briefly touched upon the following topics of the Public Review Draft #2:

- Revisions made to the lodging types and definitions.
- Revisions made to the Tables of Allowed Principal Uses, focusing mainly on the use tables specific to unincorporated Larimer County outside of the Estes Valley.
- Revisions made to the STR Use-Specific Standards applicable to properties located both in unincorporated Larimer County outside of the Estes Valley and in the Estes Valley.

The project team briefly touched upon revisions made to the following topics referenced in the *Amended Ordinance of Implementation and Enforcement of the Short-term Rental Regulations*:

- Purpose and Intent,
- The County's Indemnification,
- License and Compliance,
- Other Requirements, such as property manager response time, re-inspections, and disorderly conduct, and
- Violations, Enforcement, and Revocation

The presentation also included a link to the project website (<https://www.larimer.gov/planning/short-term-rentals-regulation-updates>) and the project email (LUC2020@larimer.org) where additional comments and/or questions can be directed.

Participant Feedback and Questions

Following the brief presentation on the public review draft and amended enforcement ordinance, the County team opened the webinar for participant comment and feedback, during which many participants expressed appreciation for the event. Some of the participants expressed support of the regulations, while others suggested specific revisions or the need for additional clarification.

A summary of the specific comments and opinions received is provided below:

- The attendee expressed concern pertaining to parking requirements stating that many driveways cannot accommodate all the guest cars. They also believe more inspections should take place in wildfire hazard areas. Fire hazards and fire safety is a significant concern for many. Additionally, septic system design and well limits should be addressed. The attendee believes that the proposed regulations put a lot of unfunded responsibility on property managers. The attendee indicated that they were a part of the Crystal Lake Road & Recreation Association.
- Attendee is concerned about the burden of proof for code compliance complaints and how to know who to contact to make a complaint. Believes that requiring the property managers to report complaints to the County would not be a good idea. It was stated that clarification needs to be provided on a few items, such as STR separation requirements and property manager distance. Additionally, requested clarification on 30-day rental vs 31-day rental. Asked that cigarette butt disposal be addressed in the regulations.
- The proposed revision reducing the property manager distance to 30 minutes, rather than one hour is concerning. Wonders what would happen in the event the property manager is outside the required distance on a hike, or is out of cell service, or other reasons. Also stated that clarification should be provided on the proposed 500-foot separation.
- Attendee echoed concerns regarding the proposed property manager distance stating that this change could create an undue hardship. Confused on the proposed floodway standards, as they thought this was already the requirement. The attendee indicated that they had recently gone through floodplain review. What would happen now if the standards were to change? Expressed concern that these changes would impact their ability to get through the STR approval process and may impact their ability to get approval. Attendee requested clarification on these revisions.
- In determining the total occupancy, the standards should address sanitation requirements, specifically septic systems. For those neighborhoods with HOAs, it should be required that a STR use does not violate the covenants. The attendee expressed appreciation for the water requirement for firefighting and stated that in addition to the STR property, the County should also look at surrounding properties and understand what is going on with water on those properties. Attendee indicated that they are in the Meadowdale Hills neighborhood.

- The participant is located in the Crystal Lakes neighborhood where they have only one way out which is cause for concern if there is an emergency. They believe that this has not been considered when evaluating STRs. They indicated that cigarette butt disposal is a serious problem and many visitors do not understand the risk. Believes that STRs do not belong in far out areas of the County due to lack of emergency response.
- The property manager response time change from one hour to 30 minutes is concerning. In rural areas this may not be possible. The attendee is also concerned about septic system and water supply or source. It was the attendees understanding that these things are already looked at and should not be a concern for STRs.
- Participant advocates against overregulating. Believes that the regulations take too much staff time. Time would be better used if the County sat down with STR owners and went through how to do things responsibly.
- The attendee owns a STR and has a long history in the Estes Valley. The income from the STR provides the ability to retain the home. They completed the Life Safety Inspection long ago and are considered non-conforming regards to building code. The attendee referenced some documents produced by the Estes Valley Short-term Rental Alliance (EVSTRA) group and asked that the County consider the comments addressed in those documents.
- Attendee indicated that they have an existing STR next to their home in the Tahosa Valley. They would like to see a dark sky policy applied to STR properties. They understand that guests need to be able to find the home at night, but the lighting should not be egregious. Attendee believes that insurance costs should go up if a property is used as a STR. This is concerning if this triggers insurance costs to go up on other properties near or around the STR. STRs should have more insurance coverage.
- Being retired, this participant stated that income from their STR near Gem Lake is essential. Expressed appreciation for transferability in perpetuity.
- Would like to see the countywide open house be held in-person rather than virtually. Questions what need there is for the revised regulations. Everyone can agree that safety is important. It doesn't matter if a fire at a STR is started by a guest or someone else, it's a fire. The County needs to look at the whole story. If the reason for the regulations is safety, then the regulations need to be applicable to all – mobile homes, STRs, homes. The regulations appear to be government overreach.
- Attendee expressed that they would be concerned about resale and passing the license on. Believes that the market would weed out the bad STR owners on its own. Agrees with previous comment pertaining to government overreach. When the County overregulates this will impact the economy. If the economy depends on tourism overregulating is a bad idea. Everyone needs to be good neighbors too. The County should try not to hurt people who are just trying to make money.
- Participant currently owns a property management company. They indicated that they have seen a lot of issues with STRs in Loveland due to lack of regulations. Believes that there could be some education given to the property owners by the County.

During the webinar participants could submit questions to the Q&A section. The majority of the questions submitted were not addressed during the webinar; however, a response to many of the questions may be included in an amended FAQ document contained on the STR project website or are addressed in the webinar presentation.