



The Corporation of the District of Central Saanich

REGULAR COUNCIL REPORT

For the Regular Council meeting on Monday, April 28, 2025

Re: Overview of District of Central Saanich Short-Term Rental Regulations

RECOMMENDATION(S):

Staff be directed to consider the District's Short-Term Rentals (STR) Accommodation policy and regulatory framework be initiated in Quarter 2 of 2026, as per Council motion on February 12, 2024.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an overview of the District of Central Saanich (DCS) Short-Term Rentals (STR) regulations, timelines associated with implementation of the Provincial legislation, and District considerations to date. A summary of the bylaw amendments and process that would be required to permit STR in Central Saanich is also provided.

BACKGROUND:

In 2024, with the introduction of new Provincial Housing Legislation, Council considered and provided direction on several housing initiatives, including Bill 35 – [Short-Term Rental Accommodations Act](#). Staff provided Council with a background report, which noted that STR were not a permitted use in the District, and included some considerations on STR. See Appendix A.

At the February 12, 2024 meeting, Council passed the following motion:

“That consideration of the Short-Term Rental Accommodations and Alignment with Provincial Legislation report be deferred to Q2 2026.”

As per Council direction, staff have included a review of STR in the Planning and Building Services Quarter 2, 2026 workplan. Following public inquiries, staff provided a more in-depth background report on March 10th, 2025, regarding the next steps required to regulate STR. Based on public questions at the March 10th and 24th meetings, Council made the following motion:

“That staff report back by April 30, 2025 outlining the challenges of making the changes to the bylaw for Short Term Rentals, including the Temporary Use Permit process for compliance under current regulations.”

DISCUSSION:

Official Community Plan

The Official Community Plan, Policy 4.4.10, notes the following: *“Do not support the short-term vacation rental of residential properties but rather encourage long-term rental to fulfill local housing needs.”*

Zoning Bylaw

The Zoning Bylaw does not permit STR for less than 30 days, unless permitted in a specific zone that allows temporary accommodation use for hotels or motels which are exempt from the [Short-Term Rental Accommodations Act](#). Additionally, Bed and Breakfast use is only permitted in the A-1 (Agricultural) zone (See Appendix B). Rental for more than 30 days is a permitted use in residential zones.

As STR is not permitted in residential zones, as per the Zoning Bylaw, the District does not require or provide Business Licenses for STR. However, property owners of A-1 zones operating a bed and breakfast are required to have a Business License.

Provincial Legislation

The [Short-Term Rental Accommodation Act](#) restricts STR to a maximum of 90 days. The Act also applies a principal residence requirement that means the property owner must live on the same property the STR is offered. The provincial legislation for STR was introduced on October 16, 2023, and required the principal residence for STR effective May 1, 2024. On May 1, 2025, all STR hosts, platforms, and strata hotel platforms in BC must be registered with the provincial short-term rental registry.

The Province will be the connection between the rental platforms (e.g., Airbnb, VRBO, etc.) and the District, through a STR Registry database. Therefore, the District does not provide any information related to STR to these rental platforms.

Alignment with Provincial STR Legislation

A review of STR in Central Saanich is in the workplan for Quarter 2 of 2026 based on the Council motion in February 2024. A review of STR will consider alignment with the provincial STR legislation. An overview of the tasks and timelines are provided below that would need to be carried out to consider permitting STR in the District:

1. Review of legislation and report on policy recommendations for alignment – approximately 2 months
2. OCP Amendment including a Public Hearing – approximately 6 months
3. Zoning Bylaw amendments including a Public Hearing – jointly processed with OCP Amendment
4. Business Licensing Bylaw review, amendment, and process setup – jointly with OCP and Zoning
5. Drafting guidelines and brochures for STR hosts – approximately 2 months

The review process for STR is in approximately 8 months. This would mean that the earliest that STR could be permitted in the District, under the current workplan and Council direction, would be the end of Q4 of 2026.

Temporary Use Permits

A Temporary Use Permit (TUP) is an option for property owners wishing to request Council to consider their STR on a case-by-case basis. See Appendix C: OCP Schedule C Temporary Use Permit. A TUP would allow Council to consider conditions associated with the STR. Further investigation is required to review the District's policies to issue a Business License to STR hosts and confirm whether a TUP would permit a STR host to gain registration with the provincial STR registry, and whether the TUP would satisfy the requirements of the platform (AirBnB, VRBO, etc.).

Further to this, STR would be required to operate in a legally constructed building. If during the staff review of a TUP it is determined that the building or accommodation was constructed without permits, then a Building Permit application would be required to rectify the non-compliance. A property owner

may wish to consider this prior to applying for a TUP. Staff would bring the TUP forward to Council when a compliance plan is in place.

CURRENT WORK PLAN:

The Planning and Building Services Department is currently working on several strategic projects and is continuing to process a high volume of development applications. Work associated with the provincial legislation means that the update of the Zoning Bylaw and review of the OCP, in alignment with Bill 44 requirements, must be completed by December 31, 2025. The workplan for 2025 for both development planning and community planning, status, and timelines are summarized below. It should be noted that this project list only includes major projects, not studies or initiatives that are part of Council motions, public inquiries or working with internal and external partners.

Community Planning Workplan

- Official Community Plan Bill 44 Alignment Update – In progress, to be completed December 31, 2025 (Provincial deadline)
- Zoning Bylaw Update to Bill 44 Compliance – In progress, to be completed by December 31, 2025 (Provincial deadline)
- Development Permit Guidelines (Form and Character and Environment) – In progress to end of Q4 2025
- Parks and Trails Master Plan – In progress to end of Q4 2025
- Brentwood Bay Harbour Initiative with Tsartlip – In progress to end of Q2 2025

Development Services Workplan

- Development applications and inquiries – ongoing
- 1124 Mount Newton Cross Road Rezoning/Development Permit/Subdivision – In progress
- Modernize and improving processes and resources for development applications – In progress
- Support ACC and DCC Bylaw lead by Engineering – Q4 2025
- Support Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw lead by Engineering – Q3 2025
- Keating Extraction Area Rezoning – Q4 2025

As per Legislative/Policy implications provided later in this report, if Council so directs, STR Accommodation review and alignment with the Provincial Legislation could be added to 2025 workplan, although there would be implications on the processing time for development applications, and policy projects such as Community Amenity Contribution Policy review.

In addition to planning projects, Building Inspections would also see resource impacts, as staff would need to work closely with property owners wishing to bring non-compliant construction into conformity through a building permit process. Likewise, Bylaw Enforcement staff would review establishing a business licence program for STR, and bylaw enforcement related to the use of STR may increase as it becomes established.

IMPLICATIONS:

Strategic

Regulating STR would fall under the priority of *“Expand the Supply of Affordable, Attainable, and Rental Housing”* identified within the District’s 2024-2027 Strategic Plan.

Legislative/Policy

Regulating STR must align with the Provincial STR requirements as set out in [Short-Term Rental Accommodations Act](#). As per background report on March 10th, 2025 (See Appendix D), in order to enable STR, the District is required to amend the OCP to support STR, update of the Zoning Bylaw to enable STR, facilitate the Building Permit process for any non-conforming units built without permit, review the Business License Bylaw, and update the Municipal Ticket Information Bylaw to increase fines for STR to align with Provincial regulations.

Financial/ Resource

Regulating STR is a special project requiring staff resources. As directed by Council, staff have added the review of STR accommodations and alignment with Provincial Legislation to the Planning and Building Services 2026 Work Plan. If Council consider adding the STR review to the 2025 workplan, although it could be absorbed with existing staff resources, it would impact the timing of other 2025 ongoing projects. If Central Saanich ultimately permits STR, the related administration and services in the District will be increased for Business Licencing, general administration, bylaw enforcement, applications and permitting.

Communications

Should the District proceed with permitting STR, amendments to the OCP will require a public hearing. In addition, public information brochures and website updates would be required to inform the public of any changes to STR regulations in the District.

OPTIONS:

Option 1 (recommended):

Staff be directed to consider the District's Short-Term Rentals Accommodation policy and regulatory framework be initiated in Quarter 2 of 2026, as per Council motion on February 12, 2024.

Option 2:

THAT consideration of District's STR Accommodation regulatory framework be added to the 2025 workplan and be aligned with the timing of the Zoning Bylaw workplan.

If Council considers this option, staff will report back to Council with the possible approaches to regulate STR in the coming months.

Option 3:

Alternative direction as provided by Council.

CONCLUSION:

This report provides an overview of existing policies and regulations related to STR, the timeline associated with the STR review project, and an overview of the Planning and Building Services Workplan. The Province requires STR hosts, platforms, and strata hotels to be registered with the STR registry and to comply with the [Short-Term Rental Accommodations Act](#). Currently, the OCP and Zoning Bylaws do not support STR.

Council has referred the consideration of STR to Quarter 2 of 2026. If Council wishes to consider accommodating this project earlier than Quarter 2 of 2026, it could be added to the 2025 workplan, although there would implications on the timing of other projects, and implications of building and planning application processing timelines.

Hosts of STR may consider applying for a Temporary Use Permit to circumvent the timing of the STR policy and regulatory framework project currently planned for 2026. Staff would process the application and

review with respect to the bylaws and policies of the District. STR operators would be required to demonstrate that rental units a building code compliant.

Report written by:	Nafiseh Rashidianfar, Community Planner
Respectfully submitted by:	Kerri Clark, Manager of Development Services
Concurrence by:	Jarret Matanowitsch, Director of Planning, Building, and Bylaw Servies
Concurrence by:	Christine Culham, Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix A: Staff Report – Short Term Rentals Alignment with Provincial Legislation

Appendix B: DCS Current Short Term Rental Accommodations Regulation

Appendix C: OCP Schedule C: Temporary Use Permits

Appendix D: Staff Background Report – Short Term Rentals Regulation