



Town of Bristol, Rhode Island

Department of Community Development

10 Court Street
Bristol, RI 02809
bristolri.gov
401-253-7000

September 2, 2026

TO: Planning Board

FROM: Diane M. Williamson, Director

RE: **Proposed Amendment to Zoning Ordinance
Short Term Rental Regulations**

Diane W.

As you know, the Planning Board sent the above ordinance to the Town Council with a recommendation to approve and the Town Council had a first reading and scheduled a public hearing. As part of the process for adoption, the Planning Board needs to make findings that the proposed zoning is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the General Purposes of Zoning.

Recommended Planning Board Findings:

I recommend that the Planning Board make these findings as noted below:

1. The Planning Board finds that this proposed ordinance is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan because it implements Policy E to Goal 1 in the Land Use Element "Maintain the character of Bristol and make sure that new development does not adversely impact the integrity of the Town" and Goal 2 of the Housing Element "Ensure that neighborhoods are livable places".
2. The Planning Board finds that the proposed ordinance is consistent with the General Purposes of Zoning because it promotes the public health, safety and general welfare; provides for a range of uses and intensity of uses appropriate to the character of the Town and that reflect current and expected future needs; and, provides for procedures for the administration of this chapter, including but not limited to variances, special use permits and modifications.

1ST READING

**TOWN OF BRISTOL
PROPOSED ORDINANCE
No. 2026-11**

**AN ORDINANCE IN AMENDMENT TO
CHAPTER 28
OF THE ORDINANCES OF THE BRISTOL TOWN CODE**

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CHAPTER 28 – ZONING

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IT IS HEREBY ORDAINED by the Town Council of Bristol, Rhode Island, that Chapter 28 of the Ordinances of the Town of Bristol be amended as follows:

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ARTICLE I. – IN GENERAL

Sec. 28-1. Definitions

Amend as follows:

* * *

Short Term Rental means a building in which one or more dwelling units or rooms for sleeping are rented for lodging accommodations for periods of 31 consecutive days or less with or without the furnishing of meals and with the owner who is in charge and manages such rentals residing on said property at all times during the period of such rental. No more than six short-term renters, regardless of age, shall be allowed during any rental period irrespective of the number of dwelling units or rooms for sleeping that are contained in the building. Only one building on a lot or parcel of land shall be allowed a short-term rental use. All short-term rentals must be registered in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-63.1-14, as amended.

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ARTICLE III. – PERMITTED USES

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Sec. 28-82. Use Regulations

Amend the Permitted Use Table as Follows:

	R-80	R-40	R-20	R-15	R-10 R-10SW R-8	R-6	LB	GB	D	W†	M	OS	EI	HPC	MMU	PI
ZONING DISTRICTS																
RESIDENTIAL																
<u>Short Term Rental</u>	<u>S*</u>	<u>S*</u>	<u>S*</u>	<u>S*</u>	<u>S*</u>	<u>S*</u>	<u>S*</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>S*</u>	<u>S*</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>

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ARTICLE V. – SUPPLEMENTARY REGULATIONS

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Sec. 28-162. Short-Term Rentals.

- (a) Applicability. Short Term Rentals validly registered with the State of Rhode Island at the date of adoption of these standards shall be presumed to be legally non-conforming pre-existing uses and thus exempt from a special use permit and resident-occupancy requirements unless registration is not renewed with the Department of Business Regulation and allowed to lapse for a period greater than 365 consecutive days. After 365 consecutive days, the use shall be presumed to be abandoned, at which point a special use permit must be obtained restart operation. Abandonment may also be established by any other overt act or failure to act indicating an intent to abandon under applicable law.
- (b) Standards.
1. A special use permit shall be required for any property, lot or parcel hosting or advertising short term rentals for more than fourteen (14) total nights in a calendar year. A special use permit may be granted by the Zoning Board if all standards are met. Special use permits for Short Term Rentals shall be valid for three (3) years and may be renewed. The owner who is responsible for managing a short-term rental must reside on the same property, lot, or parcel during the entire duration of any short-term rental.

2. The following requirements are conditions of any approved Special Use Permit and must be submitted to validate the approval:
 - a. A valid Short Term Rental Registration with the Rhode Island Department of Business Regulation shall be a condition subsequent for a special use permit.
 - b. Valid home or commercial insurance policy covering short term rentals with coverage no less than \$1 Million shall be a condition subsequent to a special use permit.
3. No more than 5 Bedrooms shall be rented in total for short term rentals per property, lot, or parcel.
4. One off street parking spot per bedroom shall be required in addition to the minimum parking spaces already required for the building.
5. Any unit that is not a legal residential unit shall not be eligible for short-term rental.
6. The DBR registration number of the rental, property address and contact information for owner or resident manager must be posted conspicuously where it can be seen from a public street during rental periods in a manner prescribed by the Zoning Officer.

Properties, lots, or parcels hosting Short Term Rentals shall not be used or advertised in whole or in part as venues for events, parties, or functions. Short Term Rentals shall be used only for transient lodging accommodations as defined in these standards.

Secs. 28-1623—28-180. - Reserved.

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This ordinance shall take effect upon its passage.