



# *City of Stevenson*

## Planning Commission

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**TO:** Planning Commission Members  
**FROM:** Jeff Breckel, Chair  
Wesley Wooten, City Administrator  
**DATE:** December 9, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** Vacation Rental Homes – Policies and Tools – Review Status

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On December 10, the planning commission will continue its work on possible revisions to the city's vacation rental ordinance. In our previous discussions on this topic, we focused on the following factors:

- The loss of neighborhood character and livability should residential areas become oversaturated with vacation or short-term rentals
- The reduction in housing available to meet long-term residential needs
- The need to assure vacation rentals meet basic fire and safety standards
- The spotty compliance with current requirements
- The need to simplify and focus regulations on the most critical needs, and improve the ease of administration.

In an October 14 status report to the City Council, we recommended consideration of the following updates and revisions:

- A **numerical cap** on the total number of units that can be granted licenses, based on consideration of the current number and the objective of keeping total below about 5% or a fixed number of total housing units in the city. If the cap is reached, new license application would be placed on a **waiting list** and approved on a first come, first served basis when a license becomes available.
- New and subsequent licensees must have their **primary residence** in the City of Stevenson.
- Existing **non-resident owners** would be grandfathered if registered within 90 days of the effective date of the revised ordinance and maintain a valid license.
- **Two units** per resident, one being with within the home of a resident or an associated Auxiliary Dwelling Unit (ADU) and the second being a separate residence.
- **Annual licenses** are non-transferable.
- Licenses specify **occupancy limits**.
- **Fire and building safety inspections** are the responsibility of the owner, not the city. The owner utilizes clearly specified inspection standards and requirements and a list of locally available inspectors.

- Ongoing **owner management requirements** to include prompt response to complaints, notice to adjacent property owners, and tenant use and behavior requirements. The owner must maintain **liability insurance** which expressly covers the use of the dwelling unit as a vacation rental.
- **Enforcement measures**, including fines and license revocation.

We also advised the City Council of our desire to reach out to city residents to discuss the possible updates and revisions to the vacation rental ordinance. The goal of this outreach is to obtain broader public input on the need for and scope of a vacation rental program and ordinance.

At the November 10 Planning Commission meeting, we held a workshop to receive public comments on the vacation rental ordinance and possible revisions. The following summarizes key elements of the public input.

- There was general agreement that a cap on the total number of vacation rentals is desirable. However, there was a difference of opinion on how the cap should be applied. Some felt the cap should be on the total number of units, both hosted homeshare and non-hosted home. Others felt the cap should apply only to the non-hosted home units, noting that homeshare units with resident owners or long-term lessees are more in keeping with residential neighborhood character and do not reduce housing stock for long-term residents. It was also noted that homeshare units would help provide affordable housing by allowing owners to generate revenue.
- One person suggested that if corporate operators are allowed to have multiple units, they should be required to support or provide affordable housing.
- Most felt that vacation rental units should be owned and operated residents of the city.
- Inspection requirements should be clarified. What are the inspection standards? They should apply to the entire structure not just that portion being used as the vacation rental unit.

In addition to our prior discussions and the public input we have received, you will find attached a comparison of vacation rental regulations for the county, White Salmon, Bingen, Hood River and North Bonneville. Note that the comparison only summarizes the regulations. If you would like greater detail, the full text of the regulations for each jurisdiction is available on their websites.

At our December meeting, we will continue our work to develop a final recommendation to the City Council. If we are able to agree on the key provisions at the meeting, we can work with the city staff and attorney to propose specific ordinance language for City Council consideration early next year.